月が導く異世界道中
4
Tsukiga Michibiku Isekai Dochu
あずみ圭
Azumi Kei
アルファポリス

Tsuki ga Michibiku Isekai Douchuu Arc 4 - Third Tome – Kaleneon's Participation in War Arc

Written by Azumi Kei

Translated by Reigokai and lightnovelbastion

Chapter 111: School festival is soon to come

The sky is so vast.

In the time when I was in Earth, I felt the vastness of the summer sky like the one I am feeling in this world. It is soon going to be 1 year since I came to this world, so maybe the nostalgia is making me feel this way.
Even if my standpoint has changed, the fact that I am in school makes the feeling stronger.

More than a month has passed in the summer vacation of Rotsgard, but that doesn't mean the latter period of classes will begin immediately. In name, the academy has resumed its activities, so the students have to attend every day, but because of the academy's foundation festival, the general classes are not open.
After a break of more than 1 month, there's another period of close to 1 month to prepare, so in essence, it's like having a break of 2 months. For the students that get busy at the preparation period, they don't enter in that 2 month break category though. At least for the students in my class, that's the case. In the summer vacation they took my classes, and yet, they told me they want to continue taking classes even in preparation period. I refused. I also have one or two things I want to do after all.

Having a festival in autumn at the academy, it isn't like we are celebrating good harvest or anything, is what I was thinking, but if the foundation is in autumn, I can somehow agree with it. But well, compared to the autumn cultural festivals I have experienced in my world, this one seems to be pretty different.
It has a duration of 1 week and there's quite a decent amount of events. The students in charge of the management are the students that are at the top and the assistants chosen from each department; a portion of students from each year. The ones who are in charge

aren't many, and seems to be quite the honor. There's several research publications and stage performances in the first half. At the latter half there's a number of tournaments scheduled to show off practical skills.
Many attend to this festival and even the inns of the surrounding towns are filled. A scary amount of people come here temporarily and lodge in an inn at the outside, just to attend this school festival. No, I might be the strange one for defining it as "just". And in truth, a good amount of state guests from Limia and Gritonia that are in war at the frontlines are invited. They look for talent and run several diplomatic conferences that go side by side. I should say: 'As expected of the hyuman's highest academic center'.
Jin and Amelia seem to be quite motivated. They are not the highest of the academy and are not graduating this year either. They will be attending the academy next year too and it isn't like this will be their last school festival, but it seems that they are doing their best daily in preparation for the tournament they will be participating. When they heard that that was an important scenario to show their talents and get recruited for the future, they got into an indescribable mood. The highest of the academy must be facing this event with an incredible resolve.

"Raidou-sama, this is the inventory of the merchandise at the school festival"

While I was checking out some company related documents and looking at the scenery, a voice called me out.
Shiki. Slender as always. In this summer we have been to Asora quite a lot, and there was a time when our diet became extravagant. Of course, at that time I was training and even with that, my body still gained weight, and yet, he didn't change at all. What up with that? If that's an advantage of being in a pact, it would be nice for me to have it as well. He is easily surpassing the 3,000 calories a meal because of the development of sweet nabe + mayonnaise. No matter how I think about it, he is obviously having a more unreasonable diet than me. How unfair.

"Yo, Makoto-kun. About the school festival, how about walking around with me to a few places. Don't worry, I won't be guiding you to any weird places"

Root. A silver haired young man. Or a boy maybe? He looks like the same age as me, but I feel like both of those denotations fit him. Well, young man is fine. His appearance is like that, but just like my follower Tomoe, he is a dragon-sama. Moreover, the most distinguished one. And he is the head of one of the mysteries of this world, the adventurer guild, and also its founder. Anyways, he has a lot of titles. If we were to describe him shortly, it would be: a genius and pervert. After our meeting before summer vacation and the shocking things he said, he has been coming to our company and inviting us to meals. By the way, maybe because I can't trust him from the bottom of my heart, I haven't brought him to Asora. Seeing that Tomoe and Shiki haven't done it either, must mean that it isn't just me who thinks that way. Because I have told my three followers that it is fine to bring anyone to Asora as long you find that person fitting.
Improvements to the anti-jamming thought transmission and the counter-measure to the forced summon of the Goddess. The things that were urgent have been mostly finished. Also, be it Tomoe or be it Mio, everyone has been steadily getting stronger without slacking off. Personally, I think that Shiki's growth rate is impressive. That's why there's a part of him that seems to be more motivated.
By the way, at the end of the summer vacation, I showed the results of my training to everyone, and all of them had their eyes wide open. I didn't do anything that weird, so their reaction was pretty exaggerated.

"Tonight, the list of company merchandise that can be supplemented will be arriving, so it is fine to continue then. Please line up the current merchandise so that there's more space in the shelves. Root, if there's no problem in walking side by side with a famous person, then I can tag along. That's why, please don't come every day. Just as you see, I am busy" (Makoto)

"Understood. About the newcomers' education, is it okay to discuss it with Beren to increase the efficiency? The numbers are a bit too much and I can't narrow them all by the arranged time" (Shiki)

Root seems to have agreed. He nods with a smile and begins to read some book at the sofa. I think I did tell him to leave though. Even when I ask him about my parents and Kaleneon, he answers me

with excuses like ‘I am preparing the bath’. When I pursued the subject, he told me that he does know, but he explained me that he only knows a bit of information about those two after they left the country. Their relation with the Goddess came at that point in time it seems. Well, it is certainly true that he doesn’t know everything about that’s happening in the world, so it isn’t strange to not know the details of what others do. In the end, he told me that if he remembers anything more, he would talk about it in bed. At that moment I asked him to leave. That he still hasn’t given up is truly scary. He came once in the appearance of a woman and it was crazy beautiful. Her appearance was that of a person in her twenties, but she had a strange charm. I began to doubt if my tastes were older women. Is the appearance of Tomoe and Mio based of that desire of mine? I thought I didn’t mind about age that much though.

“Ah, I see. That’s fine. I leave it to you. Do you think a number of them can come before it gets busy here?” (Makoto)

“Let’s see. I think a number of them will be able to come. They are demi-humans, so unless they learn common language, we won’t be able to move on. That’s why I can’t state a definite number of people” (Shiki)

Common language huh. In the end, I gave up at pronunciation. If I have a chance to be face to face with the Goddess, maybe I should try negotiations. As I thought, I do want to talk normally.

“Eh? There are going to be more people huh. Are you going to employ demi-humans again? Makoto-kun is really kind to them. No, maybe it’s just that you hate hyumans?” (Root)

“… Root. We have Lime too. It’s not like I intent to like and dislike depending on the race. I will say this clearly. L-E-A-V-E” (Makoto)

Just go back obediently to your guild and work. The guild people are probably troubled that the master is missing.
I look at the back of the guild master that I somehow managed to make him leave. I am in one way or another doing my best as a merchant, so the genius should do his job properly too. Lately I have gotten slightly used to being a merchant, but I still can’t compare to Shiki. Well, I will leave it as a task to better from now

on. About the inventory knowledge, I will be giving part of the task to the forest oni combi.

“… That person, no matter how many times we tell him, he still calls Raidou-sama as Makoto-sama” (Shiki)

“Even if we tell him that’s there’s a purpose behind it, he still doesn’t listen. And he is like that, but he does call me Raidou-dono when other people are around. If we give him a reaction, it will only please him” (Makoto)

“I have learned that. If possible, I want him to teach me his knowledge, but he doesn’t act in a friendly manner with anyone but Raidou-sama” (Shiki)

Maybe Shiki is showing respect to Root’s extensive knowledge. From my followers, Shiki is the one who has the most favorable opinion of Root. That he intrudes in this time when we are busy with the preparations of the school festival and Shiki doesn’t get angry must be because of that reason.

“Now then. Even if we try to anticipate the result from now, it will depend on the people that are making temporary camps at the outside. So, how about going to Gotetsu Shiki?” (Makoto)

“Temporary camps, ah, you are talking about the lodging establishments at the outskirts huh. The earth element specialists have made quite the number of buildings in this month. Truly a time for profit” (Shiki)

It’s because it’s this world that is possible. Making inns at the outskirt with magic when they see fit. When it has already served its purpose, they carry out the furniture and necessary items, and just return the building back to earth. Truly convenient. It is necessary to gather a fair amount of skilled earth element magicians, but in this town that’s no problem.

“Right. Rembrandt-san and Sif should use this chance to gain some pocket money” (Makoto)

If it’s Sif who has the blessing of an earth spirit, she would be able

to efficiently make inns. She would definitely be able to make money. Even if she has returned home in the latter half of the summer vacation, at the first half she gained quite a lot of power, so she should be able to do something of that level. Earth and fire, at the beginning, she was obviously specialized 100% in attack, but now she is now able to use support to a certain level. Her deplorable healing magic has also begun to take shape. And yet, she comes every day with Jin and the others, asking me to teach them. Even though temporary teachers don't do classes until the school festival is over. It may look like it is an extension of vacation, but in my case, the store gets busier and it is an important time where I have to prepare for the festival. I am refusing them every time.

"… Ah, I see. It is certainly the time when Jin and the others normally come. You are using the lunch as a chance to take refuge in Gotetsu huh. I will accompany you" (Shiki)

"Thanks for understanding. Let's tell Eris not to get cocky before we leave" (Makoto)

In the middle of vacation when Jin and the others went excessive in their training, Eris, who I left as an insurance, played an active role. Later, Jin and the others realized her identity, and she is now considered an incredible person and a target of respect. Even when told that she is a demi-human, their behavior didn't change that much. That's why, even when Akua tells her to be more modest, she still gets carried away quite a lot. Last week I had her returned to Asora for about a week and has now become a lot more tame, but you know, it is still Eris. It is better to put a collar around her. She told Jin that to be hired by Kuzunoha Company you need to have at least this amount of level, or things similar to that. Seriously, nothing good comes out of that mouth. No matter if you are level 1 or 100, the salary won't change. Ah, about the salary, I think it should be better to think about it properly. I have already begun understanding the other companies, so let's think about it when the festival is over. Since this is a busy time, let's give them a bonus.

Regarding Gotetsu, it seems that lately, Eva-san has been showing her face frequently there after she finishes her work at the academy. We have been encountering her quite a bit. Before we began going there, there were already customers, but since the time Shiki and I

recommended a few things to them, the number of customers has been increasing more and more. It may not be my business, but it still makes me happy. Well, I just recommended a few condiments and ingredients that I use in my homeland so that the store doesn't smell so much of sweets though. Shiki also enthusiastically made recommendations for the nabe. The boiled tofu made of kelp and fish wasn't that well received and I am the only one who orders it, a failed product, and yet, the old man of Gotetsu still leaves it in the menu because I am ordering it. Thank you.

I go down to the first floor and warn Eris who is looking after the store. She jumped like a surprised cat and nods her head several times.

"I will do my best. I really will do my best. Definitely do my best" (Eris)

[No well, I know that you are working well. When the students come, make sure to treat them properly as customers. Well then, I will go out for a bit]

"Have a safe trip" (Eris)

Seeing the appearance of Eris, the other employees make a strained laugh and it overlaps with her voice. Shiki and I nod once and leave the store from the backdoor.

It is still early to call it evening. Even so, looking at the sky, I can tell that that time is coming.

"*Tsurube-otoshi* huh. Today really reminds me of my own world" (Makoto) ＜釣瓶落とし. Don't know if there's an idiom here I am missing＞

I do a sarcastic laugh as I leak out those words.

"Raidou-sama?" (Shiki)

"It's nothing. Let's go" (Makoto)

I respond with a smile at the worried words of Shiki. Maybe I was making a lonesome face.

Around 1 week before the school festival. It is most likely going to be the time where I will see the most people around since coming to this world. There will be many people coming from different countries, so that's a matter of course.

I will just continue doing what I want to do. Maybe thanks to the power I have obtained in the middle of vacation, I have been able to feel a bit more confidence in myself. Even when I heard that a large amount of people will be coming to town, I didn't panic and was able to accept it. In the future I will encounter the heroes in some part of the world, so minding the public gaze is just pointless. And it isn't like I can just threaten the people that have seen me. Even if I get thrown into the battlefield, I think that my current self can do better than before. The point is, I am now conscious that I have gotten stronger, but my emotions are pretty at ease.

When I arrive at a big street, the town's noise became louder. It looks like everyone is looking forward to the school festival. With a mix of feelings of expectation and anxiety as if something might happen, I head to Gotetsu.

Chapter 112: An envoy from the church

Should I use church or temple? I used church for now, because it is normally what other stories use.

"From the church?"

As I continue living boisterous days, the academy town's largest event, the school festival, is approaching. At first, I thought of it as a big culture festival, but this is clearly on a whole different level. When I think about it, the town will become one whole festival, so no doubt this will become an event with a scale I have never experienced before.
Before the festival comes, I received a message from Lime who is tending the store. In the store there's a person from the church, in other words, a person that is a believer of the Goddess religion. Before the summer vacation, Lime has been able to exchange conversations with me. He acted so naturally that I didn't notice until after a while. Even so, it isn't like I am now able to converse with hyumans. I called Tomoe and asked her. It seems it turned into quite the big deal (or so I felt), even Komoe-chan was involved. Lime passed the summer vacation here with a face as if nothing happened. It made me think that Lime is a pretty bold fellow. I scolded Tomoe telling her that she should inform me about attempts in experiments that affect the body. It is certainly true that it didn't affect me directly and it is within Tomoe's ability so all problems could be dealt with. It doesn't involve Asora either. There's no doubt that it is within her freedom but…

Oh right, someone from the church has come. I leave the room. I change to written communication and return an acknowledgement to Lime just in case anyone's hearing. It is better to handle this personally, so I decided to go myself. When I showed my face inside

the store, the people that were in the store leak out a sigh of disappointment. Well, sorry for not being Shiki.

“I thank you for gracing me with your presence in this sudden visit. I serve as a priest in the church”

Saying that, he shows me a necklace as a substitute for a social document. He is a male, but he is not brawny and has a slender body like that of a woman. When he took out his necklace, I could peek at the area of his collarbone for a brief moment and it didn’t look like he is exercising at all. He most likely doesn’t do any physical labor. As a person that not only heals but also manipulates many diverse techniques, is it okay to go to the battlefield like that?

[Don’t worry. If it’s a business from priest-sama, no need to mind me. Please do forgive me for using this kind of way to communicate with you]

“Eh… is this some sort of curse?”

[I think it is a type of curse disease. It is embarrassing, but the reason there a lot of medicines in this business is partly because of personal matters]

As expected, he meddled into my inconvenience with words. Of course, I already have a response for it, so I was able to answer without getting agitated.

“A curse disease huh. How unsavory. What a pity. Then, is it okay to consider you the shopkeeper? I confirmed in the merchant guild, its Raidou right?”

[Yes. Normally, I leave the store to the people I trust in, but the head is me, Raidou. And so, what business brings you here today?]

“Umu. It’s about the various medicines that are being used here. The effectiveness is so high that rumors have reached the church as well. The price is also cheap, and normally, it is something to be happy about, but uneasy people are beginning to appear. People that wonder if this is really okay to use”

…

Making a face as if troubled, the church person talks with words as if sympathizing. If I remember correctly, aside from the other drug stores and magic medications, there's also the church that has a variety of efficient medicines in sale. Now then, did the church move in order to do a disturbance sham to someone of the same trade? Or did the church send a person here just to point out their thoughts? No matter which it is, it doesn't seem like it is related to the Goddess, so that's a relief. If that were the case, there's no way they would send only one person after all.

As expected, in this situation they will be trying to demand hush money or something? That he is from the church might be a sham in itself. In that case, if the objective is bribe, I can understand why only one person came. I don't know how much weight the position of a priest has, so just with the official position I can't estimate if they would have trouble with money. But if he is able to denote himself as a person of the church, there's a need for quite the resolve, so I don't feel like it would be realistic to risk it so much for pocket money. In that case…

[I didn't think the medicines in our store would reach even the ears of the church. I am sorry for all the trouble coming here]

"No, you don't need to worry about that. And so, it must be troublesome to have foolish distrust about your store right?"

[If possible, it would be nice to have those rumors blown away]

It seems it is indeed bribe. If it is a few gold, I don't mind paying.

However, the priest male seems to be having difficulties in cutting to the point, or maybe he is hesitating, his mouth is shut now. What a troublesome fellow.

"… Right? And so, this is a suggestion from the church. How about leaving the sales of counteracting medicines and wound medicines to the church?"

Hah?

My thoughts get suspended for a second. What is he saying? Is he

telling me to wholesale the medicine to the church and not sell it ourselves?

[I don't understand well what you mean]

I somehow, really somehow manage to ask.

"Tch… that's why I told them. That they wouldn't take such an unreasonable action. Those problematic bunch of elders. Just how much interest do they want to covet before they are satisfied?"

It was low, but I heard a tongue clicking and incredibly dirty words. He also understands that the demand is too unreasonable huh. I am a bit relieved.

"… Please forget what I just said. About the sweeping of the rumors, I will have it so that the church also cooperates. But for that, there's one condition"

[Let's hear it out]

"Please make clear the production way of the counteraction and wound medicines. Of course, I promise that this is only a verification for the church and will not leak it to other businesses"

He is telling me to reveal the recipe huh. Certainly, if they are able to create the same thing, it would be easier to confirm the safety of it. However, he says that he won't be leaking it out to other businesses, but, this man, he didn't say a single peep about not selling it to the church people. It is suspicious how much meaning the promise has but, should I try confirming just in case? Or there's also the option of playing the sheep here.

[Revealing the recipe huh. If that happens, the church would be able to replicate the same items as well though]

"… I plead for your understanding in that. I am trying to suggest you a reasonable method here. Is there anything… you are dissatisfied about? Ah, the school festival is coming soon and the church is busy as well, so I want to hear your answer now"

Fumu. It seems that he thought I was easy to deal with. Then, let's

try playing the sheep for now. There were church people related to the body experiments that we found before summer vacation, so it wouldn't be bad to have connections. There was also a bishop that died in an obviously suspicious manner, and yet, they announced it as a natural death. That picks my interest. When the Rembrandt sisters went back to Tsige in the summer vacation, there was a trifling incident where the church was mentioned. Because of Mio's actions I was unable to investigate in a more detailed manner, but I may be able to drag out some information of the church from this man.

[I don't have any dissatisfaction. Rather, if the church is able to sell this medicine as well, more people would be able to get it. Truly a happy result. As I am a novice merchant, the opening just won't go as I expected and my business is still unable to expand. I will tell you the recipe with pleasure]

"?!! You really don't mind?"

[Yes. Please tell me a day that matches your schedule. I will have a magician head there and explain you the details. Is there a need for me to be there as well?]

"T-That's a great help. Then, I am sorry for the suddenness but, can your magician and you, Raidou – is it fine to call you that? – please head to the church tomorrow? I will notify the reception that the priest Shinai has an appointment with you"

[Shinai-sama is it. Certainly, I will visit you tomorrow then]

"Okay. Sorry for the intrusion. Well then, I will be waiting"

Maybe because the conversation proceeded without a hitch, the priest leaves the store in a merry manner.

Shinai huh. I will remember that name. I thought he would give the same impression as a catholic priest, but he is quite the prideful one. Maybe the church holds quite the authority?

Actually, even if I tell them the recipe, there won't be any problems for us.

The medicine that Kuzunoha handles. The recipe itself is pretty normal, but there are several hurdles. It is normal, or more like, it is more accurate to say: it looks normal when written in paper.

First, the ingredients. There are plants mixed that one can usually obtain in the wasteland. In Tsige, the adventurers that gathered it would have those for sale. As a matter of fact, I can substitute several of the medicinal plants in the mix. No matter which it is, the gathering and compounding would take time.

Next, the compounding technique. If it's Shiki and the Arke, they can easily compound it, but the difficulty is pretty high. By the way, the highest leveled alchemist, who is the companion of Toa-san, has a success rate of approximately 5 out of 10. It seems he is not a specialist in medicine, but even if they brought excellent specialized alchemists from the academy, the limit would most likely be about 80%.

If the church is able to acquire the ingredients and get a skilled alchemist, they would – in outline – be able to create a similar medicine. Well, we can anticipate a pretty hefty price for it.

That's why it will probably not turn into any threat. Let's just tell him with my chest held high. Let's cooperate with Shinai-san as a good willed sheep. Since we have the chance of entering the church, might as well tour as well.

"Is it okay to make such a promise?"

…

When I follow the voice and face that way, there is a single woman I am used to seeing.

Eva-san huh. Suddenly calling me, that's not good for my heart. In the time of the school festival, the library seems to be closed, so there's plenty of times when Eva-san ends her work in half a day. She also worked in summer vacation, so I thought the library would be open in the school festival as well, but because there are so many visitors, there's the risk of theft and crimes which they wouldn't be able to handle, so they decided to just close it.

Today she worked half a day huh. During summer vacation, she has been visiting my store occasionally. I am personally happy that she has taken a liking to the energy drinks. Above all, thanks to the article she brought me, I was able to get stronger.

[Of course. I don't know until where you heard, but I won't say things that I don't consider alright]

"Ara, how scary. I am beginning to feel pity for the church that tried to put a hand on the Kuzunoha Company" (Eva)

[So he really is a priest of the church huh. I thought he just came here to demand bribe, but when he told me something that was one step further, I was a bit surprised]

"Ufufu. The school festival will be coming soon. There are many important people of the church here as well, so they are most likely trying to do things that might get them some points. The people that are assigned here are mostly people that have climbed the steps of promotion. Meaning, there are many who greed for promotion" (Eva)

I see. In other words, their bosses are coming, so to have them remember them, they want to do something. The rumors of my store have been used for that huh. What. So it really was nothing important.

Well, even if it wasn't related to the Goddess, the one who killed the bishop was Rona-san, so I can't say I had nothing to do with it. That may be why I am a bit too distrustful. Just in case, I should ask Lime to investigate in order to loosen my mind a bit.

Yareyare, it even makes people related to the church agitated huh. This is quite the event, the Rotsgard foundation festival. Jin and the others are also enthusiastic and have leveled to around 90 already. Actually, they should be able to surpass level 100 by now, but because of the tournament rules in the school festival, anyone that is over level 100 can't participate. Seems that there was an enrolled student who surpassed level 100 in a long past, so the rule was created because of that person, but it has continued to exist.

In the mock battle with the Mist Lizard, they have already gotten to phase 4, so even if they participate in a tournament to compete in martial arts or magic, I think that they will be able to put up a good fight. In the group battles where one participates in parties, I am sure that they will gather attention.

… Now that I think about it, I got a petition from Rembrandt-san saying that he wanted me to withdraw her daughters from participating in the tournament.

(Researches, lesson announcements, singing and dancing; if it is those type of competitions, it is okay, I can accept those. But tournaments that compete with battle techniques, I definitely don't want them to participate. Raidou-dono, is that necessary for the daughters of a merchant? Nope, definitely not!!) (Rembrandt)

The emphasized words are recalled in my mind. In the time when I went to Tsige along with the sisters, I got caught by Rembrandt and was told those words.

Just like in the letter, the wife that was at his side smiled gently, told me not to mind him, and dragged him away. His wife was truly a charming person. Now I understand the reason why Rembrandt-san doesn't have any mistresses.

And then, I was told that he (and probably his wife) had their daughters attend the Rotsgard academy to learn etiquette, gather personal connections, and to obtain skills in social life. Because what I am teaching in Academy town is battle techniques, the people close by will be that kind of people no matter what, but it seems that in the academy there are also decorum and normal classes, and also classes regarding social life. In the past, I did question the reason why the Rembrandt sisters were attending this academy.

[To get points huh. The church is also having it hard]

While I was thinking, I answer Eva-san.

"With the exception of a part of people that hold special talents; in the church, the lineage and factions have to fight for promotion or

the doors for their future will be closed. Everyone must be desperate" (Eva)

[If they lose, they get send to Tsige or the wasteland right? I understand]

"The people that are here, as long as they don't do anything extremely stupid, they won't get demoted to such a point, but a comeback is impossible. To climb up to the great church in Limia is their deepest wish. From my perspective, no matter who it is and from what church he comes from, it won't be much of a difference though" (Eva)

[A way to say you don't see any value in them]

"Yeah, that's exactly right. Right now for me, Raidou-san is the candidate for God" (Eva)

[Candidate for God? I would like you to demote me to neighbor]

Is she trying to joke around with me? Or is she serious to a certain extent? She says some pretty scary things.

It seems she still hasn't thrown away her wish of recovering Kaleneon. The only grace point is that it is far. Even if Stella Fort falls, it is still further away. Even if we were to regain just that area, it would be pointless. Maybe because Eva-san understands that, she hasn't done anything rash.

Her connection with that organization has been completely severed. Fortunately, the organization is too deep in secrecy that the amount of people was pretty limited. I thought that I would have to handle troublesome things like assassins for a while, but nothing happened. Maybe because she was in the outer layers of the organization.

Now she only shows she wishes for something of the Kuzunoha Company. Doesn't seem like she has any evil intent. Rather, she is a welcome person that brings various suggested books for me to read.

"By the way, Raidou-san, about the school festival… If it is okay with you, can you go together with me?" (Eva)

[That's a pleasant invitation, but I already have prior engagements. I apologize]

"You already have your schedule filled huh. Too bad. I thought it would be more interesting to watch the tournament if Raidou-san were there to comment" (Eva)

[Sorry]

For some reason, there are many people inviting me to the school festival. Like: Root, the Rembrandt sisters, Eva-san, and the mob of female students.

Since it is a long-awaited festival, I want to bring my followers along to look around, so I have refused them all. I do feel bad about it.

Jin also asked me with serious eyes to please watch the tournament. Even if he didn't ask me to, it is a big event, so I intended to attend. Maybe he wants to show me the results of his training. If that's the case, he has a pretty cute side.

When Tomoe and Mio heard about the festival, they looked like they were looking forward to it. I am a bit uneasy wondering if they will move obediently, but it is the place I am staying in, so I don't think they will do anything unreasonable. <Flag has been raised>

Looking at Eva-san leaving after finishing her shopping, I think about how many days it is before the school festival while I walk back to my room.

Chapter 113: Kuzunoha is no sheep

Triple length again >-<

I will be continuing the fast releases this week as well! Thanks for the support ^^!

“So glad the temple isn’t all sparkly”

The impression I had of the Goddess was: the glittering room, her pride, and also her tiresomeness. We arrived at the church division that I didn’t even try to get close in the past, and not long after, I was able to catch a sight of our objective, a big construction which was strange in itself, but it wasn’t made of pure gold or anything like that which made me feel relief. If it really were like that, I would have wanted to leave as soon as possible.

“Raidou-sama? Is there something wrong?”

Shiki stops his feet and turns back in concern at me who is looking at the temple.

“No well, I was thinking that for a temple that reveres the Goddess it looks normal, no, pretty solemn” (Makoto)

“A thinking stemming from the exchange of words between Raidou-sama and the Goddess right? Because of that one exchange, you learned her personality. For me, the size may be different, but every one of them look the same to me” (Shiki)

Certainly. In Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples, I haven’t thought if they were made in the image of the God. And I haven’t really thought of the method of construction either.

I see. This thought did come from me actually meeting the God itself huh. In the way, I glanced at the temples that revered the spirits (is it called that way? I don't know if there's another way of calling it) but all of them looked the same to me, and I didn't put much mind into it.

"Personality huh. If I remember correctly, the Goddess is the only God, a sublime and honest one, affectionate over all hyumans, a pure mother; is how it goes right?" (Makoto)

"That's how it is mostly interpreted. Other examples are: a gallant god of war, or things like a liberal guardian deity. She is thought as almighty, so I think that as long as it's a compliment, they all fit the bill" (Shiki)

It sounds like a lie but… When I investigated about the Goddess at the library, her personality as a God, her characteristics, they were all like how Shiki said. And when she is narrated as a god of war, what's normally used as the ones suffering are demi-humans or mamonos.

This truly is an almighty image of a God. It may be okay to give her an image of perfection, but if they see the real thing, there's no doubt contradictions will appear.

In my mind, she is already completely contradictory. For me, she looks more like those black things. <Cockroach>

"If it's the church that thinks of her as almighty and the unique God, it is certainly true that her image will turn into a majestic one. Now then, there are more people around, so I will return to written communication" (Makoto)

"If we stand still just looking, we will be thought of as suspicious, so let's just enter" (Shiki)

Taking Shiki's suggestion, we enter the temple. The pleasant air brushes my face gently. Maybe there's air conditioning here, nicely played. There's still lingering summer heat even though summer has already passed. Even so, in this world, the only thing you can do is use air conditioning magic. Use magic. In other words, hyuman

power. Even if the entrance is completely open, this convenient magic lets you control the temperature in its scope. There's the need for a certain amount of manpower, and it isn't like they can set the temperature. In the end, they would have to rely on the magicians' sense and the people around. In our house, the only men were me and my father, the women were three. I have memories of my living room not being refreshing at all. I also remember that the girls' side was weak to the cold.
Even if the science air conditioning turns into magic air conditioning, the temperature will still be dictated by the ones with more power. If you want to change the temperature by yourself, you would need quite the power and effort. Well, if it's for work, you wouldn't be able to do that though.

"We are here for an appointment with the priest Shinai. We are from the Kuzunoha Company. I am Shiki and my master Raidou" (Shiki)

Shiki tells the church woman in duty that approached the reason we are here. She is wearing white clothes. However, it seems that in the temple this isn't the only uniform they wear. With just a few glances, I can tell that it is indeed mostly white, but the designs have quite the varied patterns. That's unexpected. I thought that there would be simple differences between male and female, and other things would be totally the same. I was imagining long sleeves and low exposure clothes that covered all the way to the ankle, but that also varies depending on the person. Maybe there's no regulations aside from the color?

"With Shinai-sama? Yes, I have heard of it. Please follow me"

'I will notify them' it seems those words were not a lie. The young woman, who looks like a student doing part-time job as a shrine maiden, is guiding us. She is looking at our walking speed as she walks forward. From outside it looked big as well, but as expected, from inside it is quite wide. And yet, in the whole inner area, I can smell a unique scent. This is probability not the effects of magic. They probably scattered a large quantity of perfume. In the academy, there are places that resemble salons and use perfume, so I am familiar with it. It's just that, the extent here is on a whole different level.

While we were walking, we passed a lot of white clothed people. Every time I look, the attire changes. Don't tell me, all of them are different? There's no way that's true, right?

I beckon Shiki and whisper to his ear. Using thought transmission with a person that's so close to me is just troublesome after all. Shiki seems to be asking the woman about what I told him.

"Excuse me. The people that are on service here are all very particular about their clothing huh. Everyone is wearing clothing with pretty individual designs. It surprised me" (Shiki)

"Ara, is that so? Ah, if I remember correctly, the Kuzunoha Company came from Tsige right? In that case, you would probably be surprised. In this lands, with the exception of formal dresses and uniforms, the everyday clothes have no specification aside from the color, so everyone is wearing clothes they want. Instead of using specified clothes to work, we think it is better to serve in clothing that fits us"

Why is it? It is certainly true that with the same uniform, the differences in the subject will become clearer, but the people here are not the type that minds those points. Also, that everyone is all disconnected feels out of place. Saying that it would be better to serve with clothes that fit them, it may not have any ulterior motive in it, but for some reason, I don't like it. I was the one who asked, but Shiki nods to me and gives me a sign. Shiki probably understood how I felt. After that, he connects with some casual talk and ends the conversation.

Hm, the goal seems to be underground. So there's an underground floor. Just imagining my underground facility at the store, I can't help but have a bad image. <His underground facility is a torture room>

The type of scent also changed. At first I had my doubts, but it seems there's no bad effect in the perfume. There might be different types depending on the floor and room.

"The priest is waiting here. Well then, with this, I will be excusing myself"

“Thank you very much” (Shiki)

[Thank you very much]

She told us to wait, and then, she whispers something at a relatively big door on the left side. There was a short conversation, after that, the door opens and the girl returns. And after telling us that Shinai-san is waiting for us there, she lowers her head and leaves. It may be because we are guests, but she was smiling all the way through. Even on our way here, I didn’t feel any strange gazes from the people inside. Is it because they are well trained? I was expecting to receive gazes harsher than any I have received before.

“It’s the Kuzunoha Company people. Pardon the intrusion”

“Come in”

Without saying anything, I follow after Shiki. I can’t talk after all.

Inside, there is Shinai-san and there’s around 5 others. The space is about 8 tatami mats, maybe a bit more. Might be because it is underground, it feels like it is especially dark here.

“I’m glad you came, Raidou-dono. Is that person your alchemist? Is his name Shiki?” (Shinai)

[Yes, Shinai-sama. He is the employee I rely on the most and also a close aide of mine. Name is Shiki. This time’s request-]

“I am grateful you accepted to exhibit your techniques with the church. I wanted to show my gratitude to you guys even if for a bit, so I notified my superior, and it seems that he will be exchanging some words with you. It hasn’t been long since he arrived here, but the Bishop-sama, who puts together all the lands’ believers, has come” (Shinai) <No gender specific denotation>

Bishop. Ah, the substitute for the one that has been assassinated huh. If we take into account the position Shinai-san is standing in, the other 4 seem to be underlings. In that case, is it that person there? His hair is long. His face is being hidden by something resembling a hood, so I can’t see it clearly, but is it a woman? I see, their religion is based on the Goddess, so it wouldn’t be strange for

the people at the top to be women. Even if I try to check his body, he is wearing clothes with low exposure, so I actually don't know if it's just a male with long hair. If he talks, maybe I can tell.

Also, I wonder why Shinai-san interrupted my words. Could it be, he reported that I was the one who wanted to publicize it? It seemed like he came to our place because of the orders of someone else though…

[This is too much of an honor]

I don't know if this is the correct gesture, but I get on my knees and lower my head. Shiki also follows. But in Shiki's case, he is probably just imitating me. Later, I should ask him how I should behave in this cases.

"I have heard that while being a small business, you handle rare medicines, and you will be making clear how some of them are made. I thank you for that faith. I promise you that the church will brush away the rash remarks regarding your store"

Husky voice, moreover, the voice of a glossy woman. It gave me the impression of a person that is fond of tobacco and alcohol. It pleasantly resounds in my body. So the Bishop is a woman huh.

[I thank you for your consideration]

"I heard your words have been stolen by a curse disease. We will be providing our assistance in that regard as well. I don't know how much help we can be of, so I can't tell you to be relieved"

I didn't even ask for it. Quite the kind one. Is it okay to take her words in face value? I really don't know.

"Bishop-sama, the times is…"

"Hm, I see. Well then, Raidou, let's meet again in the future. I will leave it to Shinai"

"Understood. Thank you for sparing important time of yours" (Shinai)

From the 4 at the back, one quietly approaches the Bishop-san and speaks to her. Well, she must be busy.

After saying a few words to me, the Bishop leaves. Shinai-san lowers his head 90º. Damn, I forgot to lower my head.

“That’s not good Raidou-dono. The Bishop-sama should be shown the greatest of respects. Even if it hasn’t been long since you have come here, it doesn’t mean disrespects towards that personage can be forgiven” (Shinai)

[I am from the country side after all. I apologize for being ill-mannered]

“… Well, it’s fine. And so, today, you guys were going to show us the medicine’s recipe. Obviously, you came prepared for that right?” (Shinai)

[Of course]

Shiki follows my signal and steps forward. He brought the ingredients for the medicine we will be making today and also the tools. The manufacturing method doesn’t use big tools, so it was possible.

“I see. So the magician there has everything prepared huh. In that case, this will be fast. Honestly speaking, I don’t have knowledge of medicine manufacturing, and I want to talk with Raidou-dono about several topics we have on our side as well. No worries, it’s like casual talk” (Shinai)

Otto, this is a bit out of expectations. I totally thought he wanted me to explain the process for him.

[Understood. If it’s okay with me, go ahead]

“Then, please use the seat here. Magician-dono, use the desk there to make the medicine while explaining to those people” (Shinai)

“Got it. Well then, everyone, over here please” (Shiki)

Shiki approaches a big desk with several medicine manufacturing

tools on top, and he opens his luggage on it. It seems he is explaining the ingredients he prepared one by one in a thorough manner. At that rate, the medicine creation might take about 1 hour.

Glancing at my follower that is already explaining the manufacturing process, I sit facing Shinai-san. In the small desk between us, there's nothing on top. It should be fine to at least bring out tea. I am – in outline – collaborating in good will you know?

"Well then, Raidou-dono. This would be the first time we can talk calmly huh. I have introduced myself before but, I am the priest Shinai. Pleasure to make your acquaintance" (Shinai)

[Affiliated to the merchant guild, Raidou from the Kuzunoha Company. I am happy to make acquaintance of someone from the church. I think that in the future we will be able to help out each other]

"Fufufu, I wonder just how much of that are your true feelings. But for a merchant and a servant of God, this is how first impressions are. You look quite young. How long has it been since you began your business?" (Shinai)

[Not even three years have passed. We are newcomers]

I haven't told any lies. No matter if its three days or two years, it is true that it hasn't been three years yet.

"Even so, you already have stores in two towns huh. Is it because you have strong luck, or maybe, you have a strong backing?" (Shinai)

[It can't be called backing, but I do have a good relationship with the Rembrandt Company]

"Rembrandt… Hoh, that…" (Shinai)

Shinai-san seems to be thinking about something as he whispers the name of Rembrandt. It doesn't seem like he is acquainted with Rembrandt, but he probably has prior information about him.

[Are you acquainted with him? He lend a place to me, who didn't have connections, not too long ago, and he is also a benefactor that taught me the 101 of business]

"He did huh. It seems your and my impression of Rembrandt differ slightly. If he were a bit more cooperative, we would be able to propagate the religion to other lands, and even open up at deeper parts of the wasteland" (Shinai)

So it is that. After the events with his wife and daughters, Rembrandt has not been visiting the church at all.

He probably relied on the Goddess at first, but didn't work. And so, he tried solving it himself, and when he met me, it felt like he was on the brink of giving up. It may be unreasonable to ask him to maintain his faith after that incident. Because the trigger to solve it was the request he himself petitioned in the guild after all.

[I came from the wasteland, so I don't know much about the church's teachings and the connection between them and Rembrandt. But at the very least, I know that Rembrandt-shi treated me with sincerity. Even now, my feelings of gratitude towards him are big]

"When the standings are different, that may be what happens. Even so, I have understood well. The reason why the daughters of Rembrandt-shi are under your care is because of that huh" (Shinai)

Uhm, did he investigate about me? It seems he knows that I am working as a temporary teacher at the academy, and also the students I am giving classes to.

He probably already knew that I am from the wasteland as well. If that weren't the case, he would have shown a bit more of a reaction.

[Yes. Rembrandt-shi has indirectly asked me to take care of her daughters]

Even if he didn't pursue the subject so poorly, he would have probably brought out the subject himself. With that thought in

mind, I just touch in the topic that I am giving lessons to his daughters.

“He is a father that’s thoughtful of his daughters huh. I must change m impressions I had of him a little bit. From the reports of my subordinates, I only thought of Rembrandt as a miser with thin religious faith. Seriously, without talking to people of different standings, many misunderstandings will be born. It has become a good lesson”

‘I must reconsider’ is what Shinai-san’s face is saying. I can also see slight arrogance, but the root itself might be genuine. I can feel elite-like traits from it. This is what Eva-san said but, it seems that the church people in Academy town are mostly the ones that have climbed up the steps of promotion, so maybe he is indeed an elite.

After that, he asked me a few things here and there. While Shiki was finishing the second medicine manufacture performance, I explained him the personal history of the character called Raidou.

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– After Makoto and Shiki left –

Two were cleaning up the tools and materials of the medicine manufacture, and the remaining two were with Shinai in the room next door.

The woman that urged the Bishop saying ‘time is…’ before, closes the door. Inside the room, there is the Bishop and several hyumans sitting there, waiting for them.

“Did they leave?”

The bishop opens her mouth. Her voice is the same seductive one she used when talking to Makoto.

“Just a while ago they left the church. Just in case, we are tracing them” (Shinai)

“I see. You did a pointless thing then” (Bishop)

“?”

“I said it was pointless. You may have intended to utilize the Kuzunoha Company, but it is probably quite the opponent. From now on, be more careful and move only when I have given the acknowledgement” (Bishop)

“… What do you mean? From the conversation, I thought there wouldn’t be any problems though” (Shinai)

Seeing the complicated expression of the bishop, Shinai is bewildered. From his view, taking into account the contents of today’s talk and the attitude of them, it seemed like they were good willed. He thought they would be able to form a friendly collaboration.

“Please tell him” (Bishop)

The red haired bishop does a sigh and listlessly nudges with her elbow. It is a gesture not fitting of a bishop. She is using the same seductive tone of voice, and yet, her behavior is completely different.

Urged by the voice of the bishop, one of the persons at the back opens his mouth.

“I have investigated their thoughts and magic power, as well as the people related to them. I was able to find a bit of information regarding the employee Shiki. However, regarding his master Raidou, I was unable to understand at all”

“What does that mean? Did the thought and magic power investigation fail?” (Shinai)

“… First, Shiki. I was able to confirm that he possesses, at the very least, magic power that surpasses several magicians of the imperial court. Maybe he had countermeasures for his thoughts, I was unable to read them. About Raidou, not only his thoughts, I was unable to measure his magic power either”

It was a report that was close to telling him they didn’t understand anything. Shinai thought that was just impossible and got confused.

A magician that has the capacity to be appointed in any country if he wished, is working as an employee in a store that can be blown away with one puff, moreover, serving a kid. 'Who would be able to imagine that?!' Is what he wanted to shout out.

Also, for the thought reading which the church is proud of, to not work, and not only that, they are unable to measure their magic power either. He could only think of this as some sort of bad dream.

"Impossible. Are you saying Raidou has magic power that surpasses Shiki?" (Shinai)

"Who knows. Thinking about it in a normal way, since Raidou said he is a reliable close aide, he might be weaker than Shiki. But in reverse, it can also mean that Raidou is stronger. We at least know that Shiki is a close aide of the temporary teacher Raidou and that he is an extraordinary magician. Also, about Raidou's magic power, we can't understand it at all. It is not that we can't measure it. It's like all the magic power around him has been paint out, and we can't feel magic power at all" (Bishop)

The person in charge of the investigation nods heavily at the words of the bishop. The continuous utterances of unbelievable things were making Shinai confused.

"In others words, his magic power and thoughts were being suppressed?" (Shinai)

"That's how it could be taken. For people that can manage to pull such a deed, there's no way subordinates would be able to tail them right? That's why I said it was pointless. The medicine itself is also suspicious. Just how was it? Can I get a report?" (Bishop)

The Bishop talks across the head of Shinai, onto the 2 that saw the medicine manufacture from start to finish.

"… Honestly speaking, it was a splendid recipe. The process was systematic and the explanation was clear. Also, the ingredients used were not things that can't be obtained"

"Heh~. How unexpected. Then you guys can also make it?"

(Bishop)

“Probably. I think Shiki didn’t hide a single step of the process and showed us everything of it. But…”

The man looked like he had a hard time saying what came next. The Bishop doesn’t press him on and just waits for his mouth to open again.

“Regarding the price, I think it will be a lot higher than that of Kuzunoha Company”

“… The success rate?” (Bishop)

“That as well. It seems the Kuzunoha Company practically doesn’t fail, but with our ability, I say 5/10 is max. He said that they have brought two types of ingredients from the wasteland, but told us that there are plants here that can serve as substitute, and he actually showed us the process of that as well. The judgment result is: he was able to create a medicine that was practically identical to the one we obtained beforehand and there were no lies”

“How kind of them. And? If you said ‘that as well’, it must mean that there are other reasons right? Say it” (Bishop)

“The production cost”

“Production cost? You mean the expense for ingredients?” (Bishop)

“There’s that and the need to employ a magician that increases the success rate, but in that part, it isn’t that much of an issue. From the ingredients that Shiki told us and the price of those in the market, just with that, the price of our medicine would differ greatly from that of Kuzunoha Company. Even if we order them from the wasteland, or get the two types of medicines he proposed to us, we would have to place requests for the adventurers and that would include the danger compensation and raw materials cost, so just by trying to obtain the raw materials, we would already be surpassing 10 times the price of a completed product of the Kuzunoha Company. If the church creates it and sells it in other places, the price would have to be a 100 times more or we won’t be able to

profit at all. In the future, if they were to open a store in the areas that we sell, it might affect the trust of the people towards the church”

“100 times more you say? No way. The Kuzunoha Company is selling them at a lower price right?” (Bishop)

“They gather all the ingredients by themselves, so they obtain it all without the need of using the market. He did say that he had confidence in his circulation of goods, and it may sound unbelievable but, as long as it’s treated as merchandise, they must be obtaining profit at that price”

“No way…” (Shinai)

Shinai cuts into the conversation. In that case, it wouldn’t be much different from the other high priced medicines. No matter the effect, it would turn into a price that would surprise anyone.

“As I thought. In other words, it is safe to assume Raidou is feigning to be a pure child. While we are casually using him, a cold sensation might cut into our throats. It’s good that we were here as well” (Bishop)

“Bishop-sama?” (Shinai)

“I don’t think Shinai’s eyes were wrong. However, don’t get involved with them for a while. And also don’t go spilling the information to other factions. Depending on how we play it, they may become a trump card that could help us in the future. An unusual hyuman that employs a lot of demi-humans huh. Tell everyone in an oblique way. That whenever they hear the name of Kuzunoha Company, they should tip their ears. For the meantime, at least until the other bishops and the people of Limia have left Academy town, I ask you to make sure they don’t perceive our interest for Kuzunoha. And also, for now, there’s no need to think about the price, so try making about a 100 wound medications. There’s no need to force ourselves in competing with them. Those goods are useful after all. If it’s in a different town where our comrades are, or in the frontlines of war; just by changing the location, there are many different ways of utilizing it” (Bishop)

“Understood”

Along the priest, everyone in the room nods silently at the words of the bishop.

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I quietly clear my ears.

I hear a conversation that is not that reserved in volume. At this time, there aren’t many customers. It’s because at this time, most of our merchandise has been sold out already. The most we get are Onee-sans, who work late at night at the backstreets, buying energy drinks from us. Those girls have already become regulars at our store and now it is normal for the representative to come here and buy several dozens. The repairs of weapons have become more popular lately, but they normally come to receive their weapons at day time. I am sorry for the sudden customers, but when it is night time, we only have medications for cold and energy drinks. I hope you guys also get popular soon.

If you ask me what I am trying to say with this, is that at this time it is easier to idle.

When I returned to the store using the normal circulation route, I heard the usual small Forest Oni and the young chat-loving Eldwa talking with someone. Good grief, even if you are clerks talking with a customer, don’t go speaking in such loud voices. I can’t even see the R in reflect from that girl.

Akua, who was looking at that situation with a tired face, suddenly looked back from the account table she was in. In other words, she noticed Shiki and I arrived. For a moment, she opened her eyes wide, and after that, she seals her mouth with her hands. This time, Akua didn’t stop them, but she didn’t slack off either. Well, let’s consider her ‘not guilty’.

I beckon her to come.

“I am back. I see that you guys are having quite a lot of fun here” (Makoto)

“Is it always like this when we are not here Akua?” (Shiki)

Shiki’s tone is also lower than normal. Of course, it is not because he is speaking low.

“W-Welcome back…” (Akua)

“The customers are… tte, its Jin and the others huh. Those guys are also… pretty free huh” (Makoto)

“They are slacking. Maybe we should tighten them a bit. They might not be able to participate in the school festival though” (Shiki)

My assistant Shiki narrows his eyes. In those areas, he is strict. And the employees that got in it and have begun talking in the spur of the moment are the most problematic ones.

Akua does not participate in conversations normally? Or was it by chance that she didn’t participate? Seeing her eyes swimming like that, it is suspicious.

“That’s just pushing it too far. And so, Akua, since when were they like that?” (Makoto)

“E… Ehm… it hasn’t been long” (Akua)

“If you answer me honestly, I will reward you with a taste of the new banana menu though” (Makoto)

“For about two hours. Today the fruits were sold out early, and later after, the wound medications and counteraction medicines stock was finished as well, so our hands were free” (Akua)

So not much after we left huh. What a thing… And to think that the public is praising us for our customer service and technique. That makes their self-confidence inflate even more. If people saw this scene, the reputation of the store would go down. You stupid clerks and malignant regulars.

And also, what an effective confession. Your eyes are sparkling Akua.

Eris and the young Eldwa. Sorry to say but, there's a need for punishment here. You haven't even noticed I am already here.

I take along the doggy that's waiting for her reward, I mean, Akua, to the kitchen. It is called kitchen in name only and only has simple equipment, but I am just going to do some orthodox cooking, so this is enough.

"Shiki, is it cooled down?" (Makoto)

"Yes, here" (Shiki)

Shiki takes out a bottle with a white substance in it and a single banana from the refrigerator. And also a small bottle with an amber color object in it. As expected of Shiki-san. It seems he understood what I wanted to make just by the mention of new menu. Tomoe, Mio, Shiki and Komoe-chan have already tasted it after all.

By the way, if we reverse the order of people mentioned, we would get the order of how much they liked it. As expected, the one who likes bananas the most is Komoe-chan.

Akua is looking at my movements with eyes that surpassed sparkles. They were blazing. I can feel a strong gaze focused onto my hands.

Well, I am not making anything significant here. I am just cutting the bananas, smashing them and mixing it all.

The amber object is nectar. It isn't the nectar from Asora, but the ones you can normally obtain around these parts. Like maple syrup, it has a peculiar taste and instead of using it to add sweetness, its purpose for mixing it in is mostly to add flavor.

The white substance is milk. This one comes from Asora. It's on the dense side. It should be cow milk, but it is excessively dense and delicious. When I drank it, I was a bit uneasy if my stomach would be fine, but it's not like I will die. And since the day I drank, I haven't felt any problems in my health. The others also seemed to accept it without any problems and it is already being consumed by the residents of Asora.

Done. What was made is banana milk.

I pour the big white liquid container that's mixed with yolk to three glasses. Shiki is nodding. Akua is gulping her breath and looking at the liquid pouring down.

"Here, go ahead and drink it" (Makoto)

I gave Shiki and Akua the glasses. Confirming that both of them took theirs, I also bring mine to my mouth. One sip. The rich sweetness of the banana and the fragrance of the parallel world's syrup spread in my mouth. At the end, the taste of milk that's as dense as fresh cream is left. As a whole, this can be called a worthy dessert. I also drink it occasionally and I like it. I put away the glass for a moment. When Shiki confirmed I have drunk, he also brings it to his mouth, and after that, Akua, who was holding the glass dearly, brings it to her mouth as well.

Shiki has already drunk it before, so he smiled after confirming its taste. He made a really nice smile as he drank it in one go. This sweets-lover.

Akua drank one sip of it and her whole body trembled. As if she got hit by lightning. Well, it's not like I have actually seen a person getting hit by one though.

After that, I thought she would drink it all in one go, but she did one sip and then another sip while trembling. She really does like it huh. I unconsciously did a bitter smile.

"Hah~, I want to drown in this forever~" (Akua)

After Akua finished drinking slowly and savoring it, she gives her thoughts with her mouth half opened and her cheeks blushed. Her words surpassed the boundary of delicious.

Is she imagining herself in a banana milk bathtub? If it's me, I would definitely refuse that. Even if she asks me in an ecstatic face, I would not agree.

"It tasted nice" (Shiki)

"I am glad you liked it. Well then, let's go for punishment time. N, what's wrong Akua?" (Makoto)

"…"

What she is looking intently is… ah, the glass I only drank one sip of.

She wants to drink it huh. She is just looking at it and it is already telling me everything.

"Akua, I will be giving you that one as well, so for now, just come" (Makoto)

"Y-Yes!" (Akua)

The doggy that is biting her bone, I mean, Akua who is holding the glass in hand, heads to the store's interior.

"Incredible! Then Eris-san can defeat blue lizard-kun?!"

"Of course. If I can't do at least that, I wouldn't be able to work here as a clerk. Even at night, this place is safe. I am here after all" (Eris)

"As expected! The other day, you also showed us how you did arias while moving right? How can you do arias while jumping around like a scout?"

"That's also basic. I first choose the aria that is the most fitting for me of the magic exclusive ancient languages, then, while I am moving, I divide the spell's aria and whisper it until I complete it" (Eris)

"As I thought, it is hard to use common language arias in more than half of the spell. That's why, if I am able to master that aria, I will be able to turn it into a trump card, but…"

"Hide your trump cards. Waka taught me this. It is standard to use your trump cards only on opponents that you are going to kill. By the way, you won't be able to kill Waka and Shiki, so it is fine to show them. They are special" (Eris)

"But I really do respect you. To be able to defeat that Blue Lizard-kun. Just where did you fight such a beautiful blue scaled

lizardman?”

“Hmph, they lived in the inner parts of the wasteland. Now, Waka lets me fight with them when we are training” (Eris)

“At the inner parts of the wasteland. Heh~ is that so. Water and wind, to be able to use two elements, it must be quite the high leveled mamono right?”

“Of course. They are mist-?!” (Eris)

“?!!”

Idiot.

Eris is truly a big idiot. Just how much does she want to brag? Learn from Mondo who has already become completely diligent. At least try to stop the reception of weird things and reflect on yourself.

Getting carried by the flattery and divulging information. She didn’t leak out anything regarding Asora, but this is seriously dangerous. This children won’t even amount to a threat, but information can spread, so we have to be careful.

Akua and I were looking at the situation from the account table, and when Eris got engrossed in the conversation and was going to talk about something bad, Shiki intervened.

Just like when picking up a cat, he holds Eris up by grabbing the back part of her peculiar parka. She is as light as her height tells, but it isn’t like it is easy to hold her up with one arm. The students must have learned that Shiki possesses surprising strength. No, today is the day they learn that Shiki is scary when angered. The Eldwa was also talking to the students about weapons, but this one didn’t have any contents that would be problematic. But only in content. I will leave his punishment to the Eldwa craftsmen and the elder. Honestly speaking, they are way stricter than me, so he will probably come pleading me for mercy.

“Eris, you have become quite admirable huh? Since when did you become so conceited that you are now able to teach others your

techniques? We need to talk about this, right?" (Shiki)

"Shi-Shiki-san?! Ah Ma-, Waka too?!" (Eris)

Ma-? Wait Eris. Were you about to say Makoto? Her behavior has become quite dubious now huh.

[Fuh~, the Eris that's supposed to be doing her best, what is she doing?]

"Y-You set me up right, Akua… Ah?! What are you drinking?!" (Eris)

Set me up? You…

Also, she is being held up by Shiki and noticed my presence, and yet, her attention is turned to the drink of Akua?

"… Banana milk. It's a reward" (Akua)

"I knew it! It gave out the smell of banana! Even though I thought of Akua as a close friend, to think that you would sell out your friendship for food, how vexing. From now on we will only be comrades huh" (Eris)

"… I will give you half later. If you get forgiven by Waka-sama that is" (Akua)

"Akua, as I thought, we really are buddies that have overcome life and death. Waka, Eris had a change of heart. It is okay now. My loyalty will not waver anymore, and I won't get cocky either. That's why, I want to plead for the magistrate-sama's forgiveness" (Eris)

Shiki makes a heavy sigh. Seriously, I have the same sentiment. Is it even possible for this girl to have a change of heart? What an unreliable loyalty.

[It hasn't been long since you said you would devote your loyalty to me till death though?]

"…"

[Let's return her to the camp once more. Do you want to meet Komoe-chan again?]

"?!?!?!?!?!?! That's no good. I have already received enough princess component. I will be fine even if I don't meet her for a while. I am healthy. T-That's right. I will promise loyalty even after death. Yeah, with this it should be fine" (Eris)

[After death? That's quite the spontaneous decision. Do you intent to become an undead or something?]

"That's right. I will provide cooling in the hot summer" (Eris)

Ah, I am losing neurons. Eris, what a fearsome one. I should have protection to status effects, and yet, she is able to tire me to this extent.

Should I call her master Mondo and have him reprimand her? For now, I will have the angered Shiki take care of her. I just don't know how to get angry at her anymore.

[Shiki, I leave the rest to you. I'm leaving. And also, Jin, this includes the others as well, if you plan on cheating, you don't need to come to my class anymore. It is truly stupid in a lot of meanings]

Seriously.

I already had the church give me weird gazes and throw me strange spells, and I even had Shinai-san sending tailers. Well, right now I am not using [Sakai] to grasp presences but to hide the magic power around me, so Shiki was the one who told me this when we returned to the store though.

Until then, I didn't notice at all.

"Now then, Eris. And also everyone. It seems you have quite the amount of spare time, so let's train a bit today" (Shiki)

Without waiting for the answer of anyone, several presences disappeared from the store. If the situation changes in an instant, my current self can understand the state of affairs.

Akua, it looks like you intended to share your banana milk <(°ʖ°)>, but will she able to endure till Shiki ends wringing Eris out? Well, even if she ends up drinking it all up, I wouldn't blame her. It looked like she liked it quite a lot after all.

Let's return to Asora and introduce the banana milk to the other Forest Onis as well. I have to tell Mio, so we can prepare the ingredients.

Chapter 114: You are telling me to do that?

Guys, when pointing out errors, please write this “Error Fix:”.

“Welcome back, Waka. I was just about to contact you. Truly a good timing” (Tomoe)

“Tomoe. It is surprising that you are in Asora at this time. Is the investigation going well?” (Makoto)

Tomoe, who gives the impression of always slipping into dinner when she returns, has returned quite early to Asora. Really surprising.
After Tomoe finished what I had her do, she said something about the four seasons of Asora and has been strolling around the whole world. She once told me that she wanted a world map we once saw, and I remember giving her the permission to get it.
Even though she goes flying around everywhere every single day, she is able to handle the matters of Asora, and the recreation of Japanese-food is proceeding smoothly. I have to tip my hat at that working . She has efficiency that could even allow her to start a business in the modern world. The map may have been an expensive buy, but I felt like it would be necessary in the future, so I bought it without hesitating too much.

“Well, it is about that. I have found quite the likely candidate. I don’t mind beginning when the festival is over, but I wanted Waka’s approval” (Tomoe)

The school festival huh. When I talked about it, not only Mio, Tomoe also got quite hooked. In the end, it turned into everyone having fun there. I decided to put this week as a holiday in Asora as well. Even if it’s called holiday, in the end, everyone will be passing it just like they do every day, is what Ema said while doing a wry

smile. Truly diligent people. I told them it is fine to do some service to their families, but I wonder how many will actually do that.

“A likely candidate huh. And what are we going to be specifically doing? If it’s fine with just me opening a gate and returning, I can do it now” (Makoto)

It wouldn’t take much time. In reality, there haven’t been any intruders from the gate remnants, and even if there is one that proves troublesome for Tomoe and the others, I just need to return to Asora and handle it.

“… Waka. It is certainly true that you have obtained power with your own efforts and it is good that you have gained confidence, but overestimating your abilities isn’t recommendable. As the saying goes: at the other side of the light there’s darkness” (Tomoe)

“I don’t intend to be conceited, but Tomoe and the others have recognized it as well. It will give me confidence. What. Is it such a dangerous place?” (Makoto)

I don’t think it is so far as to call it overestimating though. And as long as the Goddess doesn’t suddenly come attacking, Asora also has defensive measures prepared.

“It is in an area that is completely in control of the demon race. It’s a place that even if the hyumans continue winning and advancing, it would still take several years to arrive” (Tomoe)

“…”

What?

“And there’s demons close using the ruins of a hyuman town as their fortress. It would be a foolish plan to leave remnants of an Asora gate in the demon’s base who are more dangerous than hyumans” (Tomoe)

“…”

Really. Just why is it that the place Tomoe is suggesting so dangerous? If it were somewhere in the wasteland, we would be

able to go immediately and there wouldn't be much need to think.
I am also getting a bad feeling about this. Is a misfortune going to happen? A misfortune again?
I also want happiness you know?

"Waka?" (Tomoe)

"… By the way, you… what do you plan on doing? Also, did you make contact with the demon race's fortress without asking for my approval?" (Makoto)

"What I plan on doing… well, I just plan on securing safety. I actually haven't gotten close to the fortress at all. From the analysis of the actual site's investigation and the information, it was possible to do some estimations" (Tomoe)

At the same time as she says that, Tomoe shows me a map rich in color. But it isn't as if the map itself is in color. It's just that she colored the areas to divide the places in her climate investigation, so it has become a colorful article. She is coloring an expensive map? That's not it. This map is a map that Tomoe duplicated to have at hand.
If I remember correctly… tropics, subtropics, temperate zone, Frigid Zone… and there's even the atmospheric temperature allocation and its similarities to the four seasons of Japan. There's an incredible amount of information written here. Even I can tell just from looking. I feel like I am looking at the notes of a prodigy who is good at putting together all the main points.

"And, here huh. The disparity between Japan's temperatures, even if it's only a conjecture, for it to match 95%… this is pretty impressive" (Makoto)

However, no matter how many times I look at it, this map is mysterious. If the number is just a coincidence, well, that would be it. There's still discrepancy.
But, the map of this world, no matter how I look at it…
It gives me the impression as if someone made a vague map of Japan based on a history book. The scaling is out of order and there are many parts I want to retort at, just like how the maps in the past were.

For example, Kyuushu (or at least the place I think is), the lower part is spread out like a folding fan and the lower part has not been drawn. This place indicates the wasteland. Tsige's borders are where Kaimon Straits is. The Gold highway we used is in Sanyo district, new Meishin, and going all the way until the middle of Chuuou, like a freeway road. Further that area, we have Limia kingdom at the west, in the east there's the Gritonia Empire, and in the north, at the half of Kanto, there's the territory of the demon race. The ruined country of Elysion doesn't seem to be drawn that accurately. There's not a single thing drawn in the Hokkaido region. Is it because it doesn't exist, or because it hasn't been discovered yet? It is this similar, so my guess is that it hasn't been discovered yet.
In place of inland sea, there's a mountain range that stretches from the Hiroshima area to the Shikoku area. There are no lakes close by there, but in Rotsgard there's one in the vicinity of Lake Biwa. I can't tell the actual distance because I moved by teleporting though, but the positions are similar to those of Japan's geography and makes it pretty easy to remember. It seems the two Seas' of Japan have been confirmed, but both of them have nothing drawn on what's further ahead. Is it because there's nothing ahead, or because they still don't know if the world extents further? If the resemblance isn't only in Japan, obviously, all the other lands should be the same, but is the information from the ocean itself thin? I haven't heard anything of it at all. Root might know something about it.

While looking at the place Tomoe pointed out, I remember a few things I thought about this map. At any rate, this place, if I remember correctly…

"It's a place I want to secure if possible. Do you mind?" (Tomoe)

It doesn't go as far as hyperventilating, but Tomoe looks clearly impatient.

"Do you mind, you say? We can't secure it right? That's demon race territory" (Makoto)

"No problem. As long as I get permission, I will clean it up in an instant" (Tomoe)

Clean up… So you are fully intent to fight huh.

“It’s a fortress you know? How will you do it?” (Makoto)

“From the front, till I destroy it all. No problem” (Tomoe)

Is she… going to fight? Don’t suggest it as if you are going out for a stroll. As expected, I can’t make a prompt decision of this. I want to say ‘there’s no way there’s no problem’. Yeah, her wording is strange.

“… Let me think a bit” (Makoto)

“Can’t be helped. Understood. I look forward to a good response” (Tomoe)

Tomoe withdraws while looking slightly dissatisfied. It’s not that I don’t trust her. However, to attack a fortress is, as expected, hard to decide. Just what does Tomoe think of their military force? And if she picks a fight with the demon race, it will – without doubt – make them hostile to us. It may set in stone our standing in the future.

“Sorry. Well, while we enjoy the school festival, can you please continue the creation of ingredients in a leisure manner?” (Makoto)

“I will do so. Because of what Waka taught me the other day, I have somehow understood *cultured rice*, so I think I can progress in a few things. If everything goes well, I think I will be able to report of a sake that the company can use as well. Well then” (Tomoe)
＜growing mold in steamed rice＞

“Got it. See you at dinner” (Makoto)

Tomoe leaves. Understanding on cultured rice huh. I don’t understand half of it myself though. Even though I told them in an unclear manner, Tomoe and Shiki seem to have gotten something out of it. Their admiration at that time made me embarrassed. I really didn’t say anything *out of this world*. ＜;D＞
I didn’t talk only about molding. I did an overview explanation of fermentation. That small beings invisible to the naked eye eat the sugar and starch, and that makes the alcohol and flavor spring

forth. After, there were some that wanted wine when they tasted the alcohol, so I told them it would be better to discuss about a place to make sake and one to make wine. I remember that it was pretty disorganized miscellaneous knowledge.
Even so, Tomoe and Shiki heard me all the way till the end. 'Isn't cultured rice a special medicine or a type of catalyst?' Is what they said in strange admiration. Sometimes I want to ask them if they get strange misunderstandings when they look at my memories. It isn't like I investigated in detail, and to accurately find that part of my memory to gather that information which I just grazed, well, it must be pretty difficult. The two of them are so capable that they were able to act with just that over-the-surface information.
Shiki was muttering about microbes in this world that work the same as the ones in my world and wondering if it is possible to use them for this process. He was steadily constructing his thoughts. Lately, Shiki also seems to be getting better at gardening and research of food. Don't know if that's good or bad though.

After Tomoe left, I move to where the Forest Onis live to meet Mondo. Ah, now that I think about it, he asked me to have the remaining Forest Onis migrate. He wanted everyone to migrate. One of the elders, named Nirgistori, saw that the young ones that migrated here have grown in an abnormal level and seemed to have convinced the congress. Well, it may have actually been because they found appealing the food and equipment the young ones brought when they visited their village again. Now that the Tree Punishment is possible to recover from, there's no fear of them anymore. If the other side wants to, I don't mind letting them. The problem is the forest and a part of the prairies in the wasteland that those guys are in control of. What will they do about those? It is still on hold, but it is practically decided that almost everyone will migrate.

"Wa-Waka-sama?!"

Probably because they caught a presence getting closer, the Forest Onis hurriedly approach and make a surprised voice. It is true that I rarely come alone to the Forest Onis' dwellings, so I can understand their surprise. Well, I didn't feel the need to bring Tomoe along, Mio is cooking while humming, and Shiki is in an appointment with

Ema and I didn't want to get in the way. At this time, Komoe-chan is normally napping, so that's a no as well.

"Long time no see. Is Mondo here?" (Makoto)

"Y-Yes! I will bring him here this instant!"

"No need. I will go. I am the one that has something to talk with him after all" (Makoto)

"Then let me guide you to the place of captain. Over here please!"

I can tell from his body that he is nervous, but he is properly dealing with the situation and guiding me to Mondo's place. Their reaction is completely different from when we just met. I was able to confirm once again that Tomoe's tortu-, I mean, training program is quite effective.

"As I thought. Compared to the other races, the residence area here is smaller. When the time comes and the migration of everyone is decided, want to move to a different area?" (Makoto)

It looks more like a lodging house than a village after all. There's sparse amounts of dwellings, but I don't feel it is a scope big enough to call it a village. It looks exactly like a temporal dwelling.

"You will approve the migration of everyone?!"

"It's still not definite yet, but it is practically a sealed deal. It looked like the elders from your side were pretty interested after all. Also, I think that in time, you guys will be able to help us learn about the Tree Punishment. You guys have really worked hard. Everyone thinks so, including me" (Makoto)

"?!! Thank you very much!! In the future, we will continue doing our best in missions and face training!!"

Quite the diligent one. Eris should learn from him. How can she survive that hellish training and obtain top class grades while still maintaining that personality? Even if she is like that, I suppose she can still be considered a genius, in a lot of meanings. Even when Akua was like that, her arrogance thorns were taken off, and her

actions have become earnest in the good sense, but it seems that it is not altering in any way the personality of Eris. Ah, I should also ask Mondo his punishment for Eris. Even with all that, she is still popular with the customers and she is also an important employee of Kuzunoha Company. As long as she doesn't do anything incredibly stupid, I don't plan on changing her. I am probably being too soft here though.

It didn't look like they had contact in advance, and yet, Mondo was out at the front of his house. Forest Onis, can't underestimate them. I lift my hand and inform my visit. He answered me by lowering his head deeply. The other day, in the end, I was unable to treat the Forest Onis with banana milk, so after talking with them, let's treat them some in today's dinner. When I arrive to where Mondo is, I tell him about the talk we had of the migration, the work at Rotsgard, and also about the new menu. I continued to talk to him about several topics.

It was truly a meaningful time. Just excepting one thing.

Mondo…

"A contemplation fist and an admonition kick" (Mondo)

The one who asked about Eris' punishment method was me. But what do you expect me to do after hearing such a response?

Chapter 115: I wake up late and various things start.

Mourning of a translator:

Konosuba, one of my favorite LNs, has received the “licensing sentence”. The Aqua and Eris from that world are now no more. I won’t be able to read about Megumin and my weeks won’t be the same. I have been catching up with this awesome LN and wish that the “company” publishes the book fast so I can purchase it one day and read future chapters of the only LN I actually read weekly.

Goodbye Konosuba (T_T)7

Noisy.

Someone is making noise. No, that’s not it.

What’s going on? In the end, I wasn’t able to sleep much because of the school festival that began yesterday. My important sleeping time before the store opening is…

!!!

Damn! What time is it?!

I hurriedly raise my upper half and look at the window. From the edge of the curtain, I could see a strong light leaking in. No matter how I see it, there’s no way that’s the light of early morning.

Oversleeping is quite mysterious! The strong drowsiness that I felt a while ago has completely disappeared, and in exchange, an intense agitation runs around my whole body. Seriously, it feels exactly like in my times at Japan. The worst kind of feeling!

I hurriedly finish changing and arrange myself in the full-length

mirror. This is a new habit. If this was my past self, the most I would do is wash myself up and while at it, fix my bed hair.

I probably began this custom after the Rembrandt sisters coordinated my clothes and all of my self. My appearance is remarkably lower than the people around me, so I thought that whatever I do it would be useless, and without caring about the season, I wore the coat that the eldwas made. In winter it is warm and in summer it is not hot, a pretty outstanding product, so that may be one of the reasons why. 'This is a way of repaying you, so please' is what they said, and I was dragged around by the sisters for half a day. In that day, my hair, clothes, and even perfume were selected. Since then, the eyes around me changed quite a bit. My face and height can be considered an established fact, but the things I wear and the scent I put on, I can change it as many times as I want. And the impression my face gives, changes a lot just by switching hair s.

It may be obvious when one thinks about it, but it is due to my own negligence and the fact that I haven't minded it in all the years I have lived. And after that, I was lectured by the sisters, saying that I should at least try to put at least a minimum effort in my personal appearance. This is a customer business, so it is good to have good health in body and mind.

After confirming once, I head downstairs.

I don't want to suddenly show my face inside the store, so I first check the situation. In there, it was already filled with a large quantity of customers. Ah as expected, I did mess up… One normally oversleeps in the times when it is already a bit too late.

Shiki notices I have already woken up and comes to where I am by passing through the mass of customers.

"Good morning Raidou-sama" (Shiki)

"Shiki, good morning. I'm sorry! I totally overslept" (Makoto)

"Yesterday you were preparing things till dawn, so it can't be helped. Also, as long as the preparations are done, it isn't as

different as the usual business” (Shiki)

Shiki’s kindness hurts. Changing the shelves, increasing the number of central merchandize, putting on and taking off posters for advertisement, and changing the contents of the black board at the outside of the store. Shiki and I did that till dawn. Since he is already up, it can’t be said that it can’t be helped.

And to say it isn’t that different from usual? The congestion inside the store is incredible. If there’s only one eldwa here, then maybe Lime and the remaining one is outside? In that case, there’s an outside line?! So that’s what woke me up. That makes me feel even worse.

“Lime and the eldwa are outside?” (Makoto)

“Yeah. They are regulating the customers. The Kuzunoha Company doesn’t have a stand outside, but counting the people that work close by, for the sake of not being in the way of the other stores, I ordered them to regulate the line” (Shiki)

“That’s a great help. Right now it is around noon right?” (Makoto)

“Yes. It is going to be noon very soon” (Shiki)

“How’s the sales?” (Makoto)

If it is already noon, even if we sell several times as much as normal, the inventory should still have enough to spare. This place is an ‘anything store’ so as the word says, we handle a variety of products. Well, medicine is the main though. Just that, even if people increase because of the festival, I don’t think this type of industry directly connects with drastically increasing sales in this kind of events. That’s why we just prepared in case there’s a need for personnel and then increase the inventory to tackle the sales. In base, that’s how I decided to go. The number one most dramatic increases are probably the inns and restaurants. At night, probably the entertainment stores too?

“It seems that today’s share will be over soon. There are many customers who are here just to check it out, and there are many

who buy goods that normally don't show much sales together with other stuff. And the ones selling can't catch up" (Shiki)

"?! We just reduced the price a little bit, and yet, it has sold that much?" (Makoto)

"Yeah. When I saw the massive line outside at the time of opening the store, I was wondering what in the world was going on" (Shiki)

A massive line before opening?! Uwa, I really wanted to see that…

"What is attracting them so much?" (Makoto)

"It seems that the people who used our products have advertised about them being highly effective. And so, people that have come to Academy Town to see the festival, while at it, they check out the place. Also, it seems there are people that have been requested to do so as well. Adventurers don't show at Academy town unless there's pressing business, so we rarely see them here, but today I can see quite a few" (Shiki)

Word-of-mouth huh. In an area where people normally don't come, there are some who have tested our medicines huh. It makes me a little happy. Making Tsige my starting point, I have been having the Forest Onis sell medicines as well, but that's a place that is being constructed as it is being explored around, so there's not much we can expect from word-of-mouth there. There aren't many customers there that have come from distant places after all. In that case, the other merchants, and the people who have visited from other towns and are coming to the store by chance, have bought medicine and advertised about it huh. Thanks thanks.

"Should we… rearrange the inventory?" (Makoto)

"No. It is originally things made along with the Arkes, but now the Gorgons are helping out in the production as well. It seems they are fit in medicine production. And so, the production amount has increased quite a lot. That's why there's no problem in the inventory as long as we return to Asora" (Shiki)

"I see. Then…" (Makoto)

“However, if we sell too much, there’s the chance it will create doubts. I think that doubling the amount decided last night should be about fine” (Shiki)

Before I could say let’s sell as much as we can, he nailed me down.

It’s certainly true that there’s a lot of inventory, and it isn’t recommendable to have people doubt us. If we stand out too much, there may come a time when it affects the business. Learn prudence.

“Understood. Let’s do that. But with that amount, there will be people who won’t be able to buy” (Makoto)

I do want to sell to the customers that have gone through the trouble of coming all the way here though. Too bad.

“There’s definitely going to be. Just in case, I have made several methods to keep down the displeasure” (Shiki)

“What are you going to do?” (Makoto)

I didn’t think it would reach a situation where the stock isn’t enough, so of course I haven’t thought about what to do when that happens. We have checked the annual situation of stores with the same type of products as us in the merchant guild, so we should learn from how they work.

“I had Lime go to the rear of the line and make it so that there’s no more increase in people. And then, the people that are definitely not going to manage in the amount of merchandize for today, we will have an eldwa head to the people that won’t make it and have him tell them that we will be giving them a coupon valid for the next day. For the customers that are unable to come the next day, we will give them a tradable coupon from the merchant guild which allows them to eat in a restaurant around the areas, and apologize to them” (Shiki)

Tradable coupon. Now that he mentions it, I do remember receiving one of those once. It is fine for the owner to use it, or you can let your customers use it. But, I feel like there weren’t that many

though.

“Tradable coupon huh” (Makoto)

“Yes. On top of that, from tomorrow on, we will be confirming the most demanded merchandize and along with the inventory, I plan on telling the customers that can’t purchase, to not line up and explain this to them. I moved by my own accord, but was it okay?” (Shiki)

“No, don’t worry, thanks. Did we receive that many tradable coupons?” (Makoto)

“Regarding that, this may be a report after the fact though. Since I thought it would be bad to give cash directly, I remembered the guild distributing this tradable coupons. If we use those, I thought it wouldn’t look strange. And so, I headed to the guild and bought the necessary amount” (Shiki)

“I see. If I remember correctly, they did say that if necessary, we could buy them anytime we want. It’s fine. I do think it was a necessary expense. At the very least, I who was stupidly sleeping in, can’t say much. Well, I don’t know if I would be able to make a decision of that level even if I were awake though” (Makoto)

“I am sorry. Several incident-like things happened, so I thought about waking you up, but when I went to your room, Mio-dono was looking at your sleeping face so…” (Shiki)

…

Scary!!

Mio is already here?

“I-I see… And?” (Makoto)

“I was asked the reason why I was trying to wake up Waka, so I answered her, but while at it, she also asked me why Waka was still sleeping” (Shiki)

He really can’t get to the point huh. Well, Shiki is kind after all, so

he is probably carefully choosing his words. When talking about Mio, he doesn't call me Raidou but Waka after all. How honest.

"Continue" (Makoto)

"I told her that you were probably tired because you were doing work till dawn. And when I told her, she asked me why I am not letting you rest. 'Do you think it's okay to wake up Waka just for this? Nope, it's not' is what she said and denied me" (Shiki)

Mio. It is okay, it was the right choice for Shiki to come wake me up. It's okay to slap me awake you know…

What a highly efficient anti-alarm clock.

"… Sorry, Shiki. It must have tired you more than necessary right?" (Makoto)

"No. It is certainly true that this was something even I am able to resolve by myself, so after re-thinking, I went to handle it. No problem" (Shiki)

"… And so, where is Mio?" (Makoto)

Shiki says even he is able to do it, but probably, instead of using my half-awake head to decide, he resolved it in a much better way than I would have been able to. Lately, when I am looking at him, the words steward and manager float in my head.

"I think she is out for a stroll. Tomoe-dono is also with her" (Shiki)

"Is it okay?" (Makoto)

To set free those two alone in this town.

"Root-dono was also there at that time, so it seems the three of them went to walk around and eat. I am looking forward to eating in Gotetsu at dinner, so I asked them to definitely return at that time" (Shiki)

It makes me feel relieved and at the same time, it makes me even more uneasy. There's no other choice but to leave my hopes to Root

who has been living in hyuman society for a long time huh.

“Well, even if we tell those two to help out in the store, we won’t be able ask them so suddenly in this congested situation” (Makoto)

“Right” (Shiki)

Shiki’s wry smile explained the matter. I can see Akua and Eris serving customers to their utmost best. Also, the eldwa is following up with flattery. Eh? Isn’t he supposed to be selling weapons?

“Ehm, didn’t the eldwa say he wanted to try selling weapons? I do remember giving him permission to do so though” (Makoto)

“Ah. It has already been sold out” (Shiki)

“That’s fast. I did tell him it was fine to sell 10 daily…” (Makoto)

“Yes. The 10 have already been sold out” (Shiki)

That’s impressive. Should I let him sell from now on? Those weapons don’t have much performance, but I feel like it might be able to cause strife.

“Well, for the people that use weapons, it has an ability endowed in it that helps them quite a lot after all. Above all, it must have affected a lot that the first customer was a demi-human with the appraisal skill. He was lucky” (Shiki)

So he got an approval of its ability huh. Certainly, he was pretty lucky. I did let him explain the abilities of the weapon, but I stopped him from guarantying its particulars. For people coming to a festival, this is high priced, so people who don’t have skilled eyes won’t buy it. I thought it would be better for the weapon to be bought by people who understand its usefulness.

“A sword that after the fight is over, you just need to wipe it and it will never rust huh. A weapon with a high attribute endowed” (Makoto)

“Yeah. There isn’t much to mention about the weapon’s endurance itself, but it’s decent. As long as they don’t do anything

unreasonable, it is an article that will support its owner for a long time" (Shiki)

"For the elder and the skilled craftsmen, this was extremely unpopular though" (Makoto)

When the young eldwa displayed it, they all made bitter faces. This is what I think: if I were not there at that time, he probably would have been scold.

"The elder sighed while saying 'the younglings of today…'. Even though they made several types of Waka's armor depending on the season. I do think that in a sense, that request is pointless for an armor's true purpose though" (Shiki)

Always having a long coat on would look bad. I am grateful to the eldwas who answered my selfishness. It is certainly true that him saying 'the younglings of today' might be something justifiable.

I want to believe that they just lamented the fact that the young eldwa endowed an ability that lets one slacken in maintenance and not because of the type of request I made. There's no mistake that the appearance doesn't have anything to do with the true essence of an armor.

"That's true. I am being pampered a lot. Then, the weapons are already sold out huh. Ah, what was that about a previous incident? Were you talking about the massive line?" (Makoto)

"No. Actually…" (Shiki)

What is it? Shiki seems to have a hard time saying it. The conversation until now has been proceeding smoothly excepting the part of Mio though. This does worry me.

"Was it… resolved?" (Makoto)

"Yes. Actually, this happened soon after opening. A problem because there were demi-humans except me and Lime. 'This store has an inferior race employed, do they really sell decent stuff?' is what they said. In our normal business we don't get such types of slander, but as expected, for customers that come here for the first

time, there would be some level of rejection" (Shiki)

"… Discrimination huh" (Makoto)

"Yes. Lime and I managed to subdue the problem but we made everyone feel bad. I don't mind if it's later, but please do give him a word of thanks. Right now it is calmed down, but even outside where Lime is in charge of, there's still some sort of friction" (Shiki)

"Can't we call back the eldwa outside?" (Makoto)

"That will be hard. A situation where Lime and I both are not in the store is not good. I think that having Lime talk to them first and then leaving the actual work to the dwarf is safer. Having Akua and Eris serving the customers is most suitable after all" (Shiki)

"I see. It isn't like they are anything outstanding, and yet, why is it that hyumans can show contempt to the demi-humans without any repercussions? Don't they feel pathetic for that?" (Makoto)

Is having the favor of the Goddess that amazing? It's the Goddess that didn't do anything for several decades and was just sleeping you know? I can't understand.

Shiki just continues making a wry smile.

There's no change inside the store and it continues without any need for me to intervene. I am so late that there's no place for me. From tomorrow on, I will definitely not oversleep.

"Oh, it seems that some of the supplies and commodities are beginning to run out of stock. I will also return to customer service and explain it to them. Today, I ask of Waka to please adjust the inventory after closing time. I will also be helping" (Shiki)

As expected, it would be reckless to go serving customers without knowing the situation that occurred. After greeting Lime and the Eldwa who are outside and confirming the massive line, I will begin checking the inventory one step earlier. At night, I will take Tomoe and Mio to Gotetsu. I already have plans after all.

When I finish arranging the inventory… right, I have to take Shiki

and go to the academy.

I forgot there are several places I have to greet no matter what. We have been here for quite a while, so there's definitely going to be hyuman relationships formed. In the research exhibitions of today there are many subjects I don't really have much interest in, but it can't be helped.

Finally, the school festival has begun.

"Let's go!" (Makoto)

With a memo note in my left hand, I confirm the schedule of today. I leave from the backdoor of the store with feelings of recovering from that sudden mistake.

Eh? There's people here too. <As in, the line reaches all the way there>

Hm, why is it? It kind of feels nostalgic…

From the rear entrance, one store away in the main street, the people there piqued my attention. It isn't like there's some weird atmosphere there. A slightly darkish skin and black hair. Yeah, an arab-like face would give this kind of impression. The abundant beard below his nose gave the exact image of a person from the oil country. Maybe it is because there's mostly people modeled from white westerns in this area, that's why, when I compare my face that is similar to that guy (if I told him that, he would definitely get angry though) in the group, I feel a slight sense of nostalgia and closeness. <He is talking about his racial features>

Well, it has nothing to do with me. He isn't an acquaintance or anything. He seems to not be minding me and looking at a list. He is looking at the list and then returning here, and repeating that process. Is he not a customer?

"Ku-zu-ha?"

It's Kuzunoha. You are missing the No.

To meet Lime and the others, I must pass beside him. I don't know

if this will work for a person I have met for the first time, but I lower my head while passing beside him.

Great, it seems he understood it. He moved aside in this road that is not that spacious.

“No doubt, it’s Kuzuha. Why is the writing of my Lorel in this kind of place?”

N, Lorel?

The name of the major power that I was able to slightly hear, piqued my interest. But I have a lot of things I have to do, so I have don’t have time to ask him about it. While surprised by the line that surpassed my expectations, I give my thanks and apologies to Lime and Eldwa who are moving busily, and began what I had to do for today.

Chapter 116: There are times when the night drowns you

Sorry guys, college is the most unpredictable type of schedule. I don't know when they will push me tons of work. And it seems this time I got the heavy type of schedule.

"To think the sake… that the sake wouldn't make it in time!!" (Tomoe)

"Tomoe-san, you are noisy-desu" (Mio)

"Calm down. It is proceeding smoothly right? There's no need to hurry" (Makoto)

But I also think that if there's ponzu, we would be able to aim for higher heights in boiled tofu, however, for that, we would need to make soy sauce. And also, in the end, we would have to recreate the Japanese- fermentation products. The boiled tofu that everyone is eating is still not in its completed state. Eating this with the aromatic salt that's normally used in this world, it is actually decently tasty in itself. Now that I think about it, there's kelp salt too. Maybe I should introduce this as well. Leaving aside if it can actually be made, there's a seaweed in this world that's incredibly similar to kelp so it might be possible.

After moving around busily, it is now evening.

Even in this busy time of business, Gotetsu still had a place reserved for us. Having a single room reserved is truly extravagant and a grateful thing. There's a long line outside the store that's normally not seen, and when we passed beside them and entered the store, I felt slightly guilty. Tonight is a drinking party with everyone that has been working in the store, along with Tomoe and Mio who came from Asora. I feel like this should have been done yesterday,

but with my schedule, it was impossible to do so. The only one susceptible to hangovers is me, so it is nice that I can watch them cause a ruckus with a peace of mind.

Tomoe and Mio requested a nabe that is the closest possible to Japanese, so I selected a few and ordered them first. I also ordered the boiled tofu that's not so popular in Gotetsu, and the also unpopular salty bird meat nabe. I ordered the bird meat nabe with a little extra added. I had them make it with konbu water as a base. In image, it is the closest to mizutaki <cooking in water>. It is already been quite long since I have eaten it, and there's doubtful parts too though.

Shiki and the employee team are doing what they please and ordering anything they want as they go 'wai wai' and having fun. There are already a few empty nabes that are left to the side. Shiki has a cream nabe in front of him and a mayonnaise bottle in one hand, and seems to be considering something. That, I will never eat it.

"Waka, this is delicious. Truly delicious. Boiled tofu, mizutaki. Both of them may not be the same as the originals, but it does give the proper image. That's why! I hate myself for not being able to prepare Japanese sake here!" (Tomoe)

While drowning in defeat, Tomoe does a fervent speech. With her sleeves rolled up, she is frequently pouring alcohol in her beer mug. I don't think the amber colored one is supposed to go in beer mugs you know. Even if in the near future you are able to create the Japanese-type one, I wonder if it will truly satisfy you.

"Is this… nabe-desu ka? It looks like it is a cooking that has quite the variety-desu no ne. Fish, meat, vegetables, diverse flavoring, and above all, the soup that serves as the base. This is… I have now considered this something worth trying!" (Mio)

Mio, while pinching several things, seems to be interested in boiled tofu and mizutaki as expected. The mizutaki has quite the close taste, but in my personal opinion, not having something to substitute for crown daisy is what creates a bottleneck. Does Asora have it? I don't find an ingredient for nabe that useful, so there's no

need to waste our time trying to search for it, is what I thought as I remembered a plant I didn't voice out.

"Wait for it men sake of Hyougo's open sea, women sake of Kyoto. I will show you that I will finish it soon!" <待っておれよ兵庫灘の男酒、京都伏見の女酒。すぐに辿り着いてみせようぞ！>
(Tomoe)

… Tomoe's dream. It is at an absurdly high place huh. If that's her objective, then there's still a long way to go. Men sake and women sake, if you really want to do those, you would have to first finish the production of things like rice and water. In Edo, the sake was probably pretty popular at the latter half, but there's no need to go so far you know. And also, no matter how I look at it, Tomoe has a first rate dry taste.

Since I came to this world, I have understood the greatness of internet. I was in a world where it was truly easy to search for information huh.

"Waka, I think cream and mayonnaise might have unexpected compatibility but, do you have memory of a cuisine like that?" (Shiki)

"Shiki, I am sorry but, the only thing I can see in common about those two is the color. Please don't begin scary experiments before even getting drunk" (Makoto)

Just imagining the taste of those two together, I feel like my appetite wanes. I hope the subject strays into soy milk nabe or something like that…

"Sorry for the wait! I have brought the additional ingredients and nabe!"

The one who entered the room cheerfully is Ruria. Behind her, I can tell the situation of the store.

Big congestion. Truly a total mayhem. Incredible. Nabe isn't the type that you eat fast and leave quickly, so what about the customers that are waiting?

“This is a big success huh, Ruria. You seem to be moving with quite the vigor but, will you be able to keep that up for one week? Forcing yourself is poison to the body. I will bring an energy drink tomorrow” (Shiki)

Shiki lifts his head up and talks to Ruria. How natural. I should learn from that.

“I am fine Shiki-san! I am already prepared for the congestions in this times after all! Onee-chan is also helping out” (Ruria)

E? The librarian Eva-san is? Helping out Ruria in this situation? Isn’t that impossible?

[Eva-san is able to serve customers too? How talented]

“Eh?! Ah… uhm… Onee-chan is helping in the kitchen by washing the dishes and cutting the vegetables” (Ruria)

… She must have been send to the kitchen. ‘Go there do the dishes and cut the vegetables’ is probably how it went. What an expected conclusion. Glad I didn’t ask her straight.

“It’s the place that I am working in, so she always comes every year to help, but as expected, she is not suited for this kind of things. In the house, Onee-chan is always the one who does the washing, so she is helping out in that aspect” (Ruria)

“With just that much, I can tell that she is a truly good sister” (Shiki)

“Shiki-san, it is not that you can tell you know. She is actually a good sister after all. Ah, sorry. I will be returning now. If you want to order anything more, don’t hesitate to call!” (Ruria)

Ruria is probably able to do what Akua and Eris do. Look like they are in several places at once when serving the customers. Serving customers is deep. Could it be… this is one of the strongest combat jobs?!

Also, she was able to predict the contents of what Shiki was about to say. Can’t underestimate her.

… Maybe I'm a little drunk now.

"Well well, today I had Root guide us and went looking around. It is a fun festival huh. For just a single festivity, several people of high positions in the major powers come here and check things out, nobles and big merchants bring along their attendants and can be seen coming and going" (Tomoe)

"Yeah. In Tsige there's always food carts, but here there's more variety. There were also many cuisines with different cooking methods, so I am looking forward to tomorrow. Ah right, Waka-sama, it seems in the country called Lorel, there's a custom where they eat a part of the fish raw-desu yo" (Mio)

In the content of what both Tomoe and Mio talk, I can tell that they are enjoying the festival, but their directions are totally different. They travelled together and yet their impressions are so different.

"Also, in the academy area where normal visitors are unable to enter, the students were pleasantly training. It seems at the latter half there will be martial art and magic tournaments. I wonder how well the students of Waka will fare. I would like to watch the tournament along with Waka" (Tomoe)

"With this chance, I will increase my information and widen my cooking skills! When with Root, there's no need to line up that much, so it is convenient" (Mio)

I already promised Jin that I would be watching his match, so there shouldn't be any problems in bringing Tomoe and Mio along. Root said he wanted to come too, but with his position he would be treated as a guest, so going together is totally impossible.

Nevertheless, it seems Root has done well in this one day. I don't think they haven't caused a single problem. In this kind of festivals, quarrels are something that always happen, so I don't want to be so fussy about it. As long as they don't cause trouble with any of the high position people Tomoe mentioned a while ago, that's fine.

"Yeah, it is a festival that occurs once a year after all. It will make me happy if you two have as much fun as you can. About watching

the match, let's all go" (Makoto)

My followers nod matching my words. With how today went, there should be no problems with me and Shiki checking out the festival in shifts. It is okay to consider the merchandize mostly sold out by noon. Basically, when there's nothing to sell anymore, it is fine to just hear out the people that came to ask something. We have means for contact after all.

If I remember correctly, tomorrow at noon I have plans with Rembrandt-shi to go together to the publication that the sisters are participating in. I cannot oversleep no matter what. I should stop the alcohol and just continue with the nabe.

The surroundings are already pretty completed too. Tomoe and Lime merrily drink and make noise. Mio looks like she is having a serious match with the nabe and her cheeks are slightly flushed. The two Forest Onis and Shiki are mass producing empty bowls of nabe. The eldwas are eating the yakiniku-like nabe with small amounts of soup and bringing the meat to their stomachs with beer.

Everyone looks like they are making noise and having fun. It's necessary to have times where you just don't care about anything and just liberate yourself.

Now then, how about challenging the limited menu!

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"The attack to Stella Fort is coming, and yet, to leave the country is just… there's a limit to stupidity"

"If the empire didn't have that princess attend, there would have been no need for us to attend but… there's a need to confirm their true motives"

"I know that already! The problem is all because of that empire hero and princess Lily. There are traces of them entering my Limia country without permission as well. To be stirred from the inside in times of war, I just can't handle it. Having internal troubles with the same hyumans as us is just…"

“Hibiki-dono is a hero as well, but it seems that her way of thinking differs a lot from the Iwahashi Tomoki of the empire. Instead of calling it her accepting them, it is best to call it a relationship where both parties are using each other. If we are not careful, they might become our next enemies”

“I also know that already! That’s why you came here, to investigate their movements and find a way to keep them in check right? Damn empire, what are they scheming?”

Rotsgard, situated at the center of Academy Town and serving as the tower where the most exemplar students gather. And inside that place, there’s one area inside the academy where they receive the guests. Among that area, there’s a room that has especially tight security, a male in his prime of life and a young man of about 20 are conversing there.

Limia’s king and the second prince. Even if he is the second prince, he is a bit older than the first prince Bredda. It can be said that this is proof that there are complicated circumstances regarding political power inside Limia. From the contents of the conversation as well, one can tell that he is working as the counselor of the king.

The words of the king leaked out his anger. Even so, he hasn’t shown this shameful sight in public. Because he is a king. In preparation for the next attack to Stella Fort which is a key place the hyumans have been unable to reclaim from the demon race for a long time, normally, the king should be in his kingdom in wait for that moment. Even if the Rotsgard school festival is an important event where they can find talent to support the future of Limia, it isn’t an event that the king should be attending in this war situation. Then, why is he in this town?

Empire princess, Lily. She is the reason why.

The princess that Hibiki told them to be careful of after she returned from the Stella Fort battle. Even if she is called a princess, she has resigned her rights for the imperial throne and has taken her hands off the enterprises she has been administering. A girl that is trying to disappear from the spotlight. Even without the warning of the hero, Limia has been marking her movements, but after she

resigned her rights for the imperial throne, her priority has lowered.

But with the empire's hero and Princess Lily who supports him, there's an aura of turbulence and the attention has once again gathered to her. As a result, several strange movements with unknown objectives have been confirmed. Recently there was also a report saying that there were sightings of them in the lake that was said to be created by the mysterious power, the Devil. This isn't an action that should be done by the princess of a major power to its ally Limia. And that girl, in the current situation where the fight is close, she took separate action from the hero and has come to Academy Town to attend the school festival. Her objective is a courtesy visit to Academy Town and find talent. Of course, Limia knew this announcement was all just a front. That's why, they can't leave it be.

And so, another problem surfaces. The suspicious empire princess that wouldn't be an exaggeration to call fox, who will be the one in Limia that will be handling her?

Large part of Limia's cabinet ministers are nobles who inherited the position. Bluntly speaking, the amount of incompetent people is not small. The status of the household and its power influences the official positions. As the king, it is one of the big problems he wants to fix, however, this isn't something he can undertake with half-assed resolve. This is way too big of a reform to do in the middle of a war with the demon race.

In short, the Limia king, for the sake of checking a difficult individual, has few people that can search for her real intent and that he can truly trust. The people that fit in that category are naturally assigned with several important jobs, so their hands are already filled. Moreover, they now have a big pillar in war by the name of Hibiki. The king who has the trait of not caring about moving himself, headed to Academy Town that is said to take one week from Limia kingdom, and with the secret teleport formation it only took one day and a half. And so, the Limia king visited Rotsgard in the period of the school festival. Even if he is resolved to return when the battle begins, this is quite the despairing decision.

That's why, because the Limia king, who reigns at one of the top class hyuman countries, is attending the school festival, several places were affected by it. As a result, this year's Rotsgard school festival is a lot more extravagant in its cast compared to last year. When the festival heats up at the latter half, the attendance to the events will increase, but aside from that, it will mostly turn into diplomatic places for the nations.

"I still haven't talked with Princess Lily, so I still don't know the intentions of the empire. King, it is soon time for our next schedule"

"Lorel Union right? If possible, I would want them to excavate in Limia the hot springs that are considered the specialty of their country. I would like that kind of diplomatic discussions"

"Fufu, those are quite nice, but I don't think it is the type of thing that can be exported. Now that you mention it, it seems hero-dono also knows about hot springs. Brother was thinking if they could somehow go to Lorel"

"That idiot. Sorry. Because of his self-centeredness, he is bringing more work to you"

"No. Actually, his way of thinking and ability to act are things I don't have and it makes me jealous. Brother will definitely be a fit vessel as a king. I can assure it"

The second prince that had maintained a complicated expression, showed a slightly gentle face. He looks like a person that gets in many head aching situations and has a stiff face, but when talking about his family, it seems it made him feel calm.

In the small space of silence, the entrance door is knocked. Hearing that, the two inside the room change their gears and turn to their business face.

Being informed of the visitor's name, a voice asking to enter the room is heard.

"Come in"

With a voice filled with majesty, the king gives his permission.

After a vocal message and greetings, and added statements of flattery and courtesy, the king urged them to take seat in the sofa that is set in the reception space to the number of men and women that came.

“We are in this type of place, so no need to be so stiff. Now then, first of all, state what you want of our Limia”

If we count them in the four major powers, Limia Kingdom and Lorel Union are in the same rank, however, the truth is Limia has quite the high national power. The originally strong Gritonia and Limia obtained heroes and now their power increased even more, so the current state is that the major powers are divided in the two high and the two lower.
As a result, Lorel is seen as lower and is treated as so.

“… Well then, I will be straight and say it. Please return priestess-sama”

Maybe the attitude of the king had something to do as well, the man in the center that seems to be the representative opens his mouth big.

“Hoh~, the priestess-dono? She is accompanying the hero that descended to Limia, Hibiki-dono. She is travelling together and fighting along with her on her own will. If I remember correctly, isn’t there a rule in your country that states that no one is able to go against the will of the priestess-dono and no one is to hinder her?”

In contrast to that, the Limia king answers indifferent. Inside, he is thinking: “Do you only know how to say that?” while completely fed up. This is not the first time they have brought up the talk of the priestess.

“We are grateful that you have helped priestess-sama when she arrived to your country. We are also thinking about giving a fitting thanks for the hero Hibiki-dono. We will also teach you about the techniques of our Lorel as much as you want”

(Yeah right. He says that, but he doesn’t intend to explain anything in detail)

The king thinks that, and without changing his expression, he swallows those words.

“Fumu, I have also brought this talk to Hibiki-dono, but just as how I said before, Hibiki-dono wishes for the strength of your country’s priestess, Chiya-dono. And the priestess-dono consented. There’s no need to think about it, we already consider that your country has given their gratitude. No need to worry” (King)

“… For the major power that’s called the matchless by hyumans to abduct an important personage of another country, moreover, having her fight in a battlefield that is filled with danger. This might become a big problem you know?”

“This is vexing. Bringing out falsehoods and bending the truth of the priestess-dono’s current state, I can’t let that pass. We didn’t abduct your priestess-dono, she willingly decided to become hero-dono’s strength. Limia is in the foremost line of the war against the demon race along with Gritonia, and of course, this comes with danger, however, priestess-dono understands that and still decided to do so. No, it can be said that the priestess-dono is providing rear aid to your country and taking the initiative to support the hero-dono in the frontlines. Isn’t this something your country should be proud of? Isn’t the demon race a common enemy of us hyumans?” (King)

Frontline and rear aid, telling them about the difference in positions, the Limia king corners the other party.

“But you should know just how important the priestess-sama is for us! Do you think we can just shut our eyes knowing that her life is in danger?!”

The woman that was silent at the side, stood up and used a tone that can be easily said to be rude towards a king. The prince turns his face in order to tell her to remonstrate, but the king used his eyes to take over the next action.

“If you become emotional, we won’t be able to discuss. Think about it thoroughly. Right now, the hero-dono’s movements are gathering the attention of the whole world. If in that situation, you were to

take your priestess-dono, one-sidedly ignoring her own will and pulling her apart from the hero-dono, just see what happens. How will the people in the world react to that? You can imagine it right? If your country wants to do so no matter what, send an envoy. We will definitely return your priestess-dono. However, about this matter, we will not provide any support. If you are insecure, just bring your most elite. I promise we will definitely arrange for priestess-dono. As long as priestess-dono wishes to be with hero-dono, I think that what your country should be doing is supporting her though" (King)

"Limia… takes hostages?"

"Stop that"

Words of anger were muttered. There was no need for the Limia side to say anything, the man sitting in the middle stopped her.

"I will forget those words just now" (King)

"… I'm grateful. What you say is plausible. Just, for us, the priestess-sama is an irreplaceable personage. At this rate, it will bring bad effects to the relationship between both of our countries. If possible, we ask for some sort of progress while in your stay at Academy Town"

"I will keep it in mind. We also wish for this matter to head in a favorable direction" (King)

Silent and cold, those eyes of the man in the middle that make one feel a strong will. He stands up, and his other companions also stand up. In their eyes, instead of calm, you could feel something close to hatred in that strong light. You can tell just how important is the existence called priestess for the Lorel country.

Without turning around, they leave the room. After confirming that their presences grew further away, the prince opens his mouth.

"A rude behavior and contempt. We should issue an official protest to the Union about this"

"No need. Well, it's not like I don't understand their point after all.

It's to say, the same feeling as having Hibiki-dono not returning to the empire" (King)

"That is…"

"Also, right now creating stormy situations with other countries is a bad idea. To check the empire, we need to have our country in their best condition or we won't be able to move how we want to. The will of the priestess Chiya-dono holds no lie and she is standing alongside Hibiki-dono. Even if it takes a long time, we have no choice but to wish for their understanding" (King)

The Limia King breathes out a deep sigh.

Moving as they wish, if that were to truly happen, the world wouldn't be in this much of a chaos right? Even when feeling that that's too immature, the king thinks so in that way. It's a feeling he had forgotten a long time ago, but the kingdom's hero is the kind of existence that makes you remember those immature feelings. Maybe she will be able to realize that kind of wishful thinking, is what he faintly feels. Will it become a sweet poison that will bring the destruction of the kingdom, or will it become the explosive that will reform the thoroughly rotten Limia monarchy?

Just like the war with the demon race, the Limia kingdom's fate is also beginning to move largely, is the hunch of the king in his prime.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

"Isn't it fine, isn't it fine~! I like it, you so called Ruria. You want to become my bride?! Good, then come!"

"T-T-T-Tomoe-sa~n?! Stop. Ah… please don't fondle~!"

"Yo!! Tomoe-nesan, how manly!"

"Ahn? Baniana mayounneise tte huh?"

"Eris, milk milk"

"Oil, there's not enough oil!! Ruria-chan, one more of the one that

makes my throat burn!”

“… Oil, that’s right, oil! With oil of strong flavor, this nabe might be perfected!”

“Yeah, finely cut the fat meat and then put the noodles… zzz”

…

That hellish and uncontrollable scenery, my sober self was looking at it from the entrance of the private room.

Maybe the fun atmosphere turned it this way, or there might a different cause for it. In summary, including my retainers, everyone in the room except me was drunk in alcohol.

The drinks of Tomoe, Mio, and also Shiki were especially strong in alcohol, and their way of drinking is fitting to call it savage. Why does it have to happen today of all days?

It didn’t look like the alcohol had anything out of the ordinary. What a mystery.

It is already late in the night and the ingredients of Gotetsu are running out. The remaining customers are mostly the ones who enjoy alcohol, but they already began dispersing and people who try to make a pass with the waitress began appearing.

The Kuzunoha Company’s drunk army that jumped out from the private room, at that time, promptly subjugated the bad atmosphere that was beginning to appear.

Sniffing out the disturbance, Tomoe scattered the hoodlums from every direction. If that was all it was to it, it would have looked cool, but this time the attention began to gather around her. And that’s how the hellish picture was created.

Fortunately, the furnishing is still safe and sound, but if I leave it be, it’s just a matter of time. Man, so troublesome.

And then, what I feared occurred.

“Raidou-san, even for me, this is troublesome”

The shop manager. Right~? I also have a bit of alcohol in my system, but compared to the bunch making a fuss, I am still normal.

[I am sorry. They normally don’t get this chaotic though]

“It is because it’s Raidou-san that I am not going as far as saying you are prohibited to enter, but can you please take them with you already? With this, I can’t even close the store and the remaining customers won’t be able to leave”

[Got it. Thanks for the meal]

No matter how much I calculate, the math just won’t catch up, so I give him quite the amount of money.

“It helps a lot that Raidou-san always pays in cash. Then, I will be bringing the change fast, so please wait here for a bit”

[No need. We have caused you trouble so please take it. If you don’t, it would be hard on me the next time I come here]

It may not have been us, but I could see several desks and chairs damaged. Anyways, this spectacle, just by looking at it I can tell its chaos.

“… N? Even if you say that, you are also taking care of us quite a lot. Ah right! The next time you come, I will give you service fitting the extra”

[Thank you very much. Well then, for today, thanks for everything]

“Ahahaha! That’s my line. The festival is still continuing, so buy, sell, drink and eat! Come here again. We will always be waiting for you!”

The words of the shop owner uncle healed me, and after calling out the guys with lighter symptoms, we began our leave.

I carry the clearly bigger Mio and Shiki, and leave the store. When we left, the cold night wind permeated my body. I’m glad that

Tomoe is narrowly able to walk. Lime is lending his shoulder and she is somehow able to walk. No, they are probably supporting each other there. Like a pair of drunkards.

Will we manage to wake up properly tomorrow?

Hope it doesn’t come to the scenario where only I get to wake up normally.

With a tinge of uneasiness, the first day of the school festival finished.

Chapter 117: Second day, wallflower

“Sorry. Having you do something similar to a bodyguard”

[No, don’t mind it. Also, if I came to this kind of place by myself, I wouldn’t know how to behave and that would only trouble me. It’s great that I was invited by Rembrandt-san]

In truth, I am following around half a step behind him like an extra.

Dance hall (I have never went to one, so I don’t know if that’s truly how it is called here though). I don’t know the proper way of acting in this kind of place after all.

Second day of the school festival. Finishing work more efficiently than the first day, I met with Rembrandt-san, who I had an appointment with, and arrived at the academy. For about half a day until the buffet-format dinner finishes, there will be a party to assess etiquette, or so it seems. There are relatives of students and people that have been invited like me, but the atmosphere is clearly different from the places I am normally in.

For guests like us, it is okay to just enjoy the party, watch over your student relatives, have chats, act in however way you wish. Rembrandt-san has already greeted several merchants and has received greetings from several people.

The students, who are the original leads, are participating in this event complying with the classes they attend to, and their actions and conduct will be evaluated, or so I heard. So they are being tested for half a day here huh. Honestly, I pity them.

“If my wife Lisa came along with me on the trip here, Morris would have to take the duties of the company and there is the chance he wouldn’t be able to handle the problems that appear. Having you

close is reassuring” (Rembrandt)

[What’s most important is that your wife has safely recovered. It would be nice if Morris-san were to come next year too]

The reason why I came here with him is because of Morris-san’s absence, and that’s why I am acting as his bodyguard. But the truth is different. Half of the reason is because his daughters told him to bring me here, and the other half is to introduce me to a trading place, or so I think. The second reason is one that I thought of when I got here.

If he really needed a bodyguard, it is fine to just hire one, and his wife coming after because she has something to do first just sounds made up. The people Rembrandt-san greeted, and the people that came to greet him, he looked at me and introduced my name and the name of the Kuzunoha Company. Even the dense me knows what he is actually doing.

His wife is most likely going to come a little later after the party begins and reunite with Rembrandt-san. While feeling a bit uncomfortable, I greeted a few active merchants and a number of nobles. When they first saw me, they had surprised eyes as if startled, eyes that clearly looked down on me, eyes that judged me as a slave Rembrandt-san brought along with. There were a lot of types, but maybe they slightly understood after I explained them my standing, most of them accepted at least a handshake. In truth, I am conscious that I am quite out of place here. As long as I get a handshake and introduce myself, it can be said I have done pretty well already.

There isn’t a single demi-human here after all. There’s only hyumans. And they are all dressed up in extravagant appearances. The women that are wearing dresses of vibrant colors are dancing in the hall and it’s truly a spectacle. After all, there’s not a single one of them whose appearance is outshone by their dress. I am the only one that’s losing to my clothes. After Rembrandt-san finishes one round of greetings and reunites with his wife, I will just quietly stay at the corner of a wall and look at the state of the sisters.

“Dear, sorry for being late”

Hm, the wife has appeared huh. The time I met her when I went to Tsige in summer I thought this as well but, she is truly beautiful. It tells me all over again why Rembrandt-san doesn't have lovers. Just with her outward appearance it already makes me think that way, so she is probably amazing in many other aspects <(゜ʖ゜)>. No matter if male or female, after they pass their thirties, their way of life begins to show in their outward appearance as well, is how I think.
Her body makes you wonder if she really had two children. Her face as well, when comparing it with her true age, she looks quite younger. An unrivalled young-looking Caucasian.
I have seen a decent amount of hyumans, so now that I have seen her for the second time, I am able to slightly distinguish her age. The first time I saw her after recovering from her ghoul state, I thought she was the elder sister.
… If I were together with my elder and younger sister, the people might mistake me for their uncle. I simply don't like that. Being treated as the only one growing old.

"Ah, Lisa. Today you decided on the blue dress huh. It looks good" (Rembrandt)

[It's been a long time. Are you not tired because of the long journey?]

Ah.

Damn. Was I supposed to praise her dress too? I unconsciously talked to her the way I normally do.

"Thank you. They went through the trouble of bringing it here after all. I thought the dress would be sad since I haven't had the chance of using it ever since I bought it" (Lisa)

The madam responds merrily to Rembrandt-san and makes a turn to show off her dress. A slightly tight blue dress that gives off a deep impression. It certainly does seem like there's not many chances to wear it. But in this kind of party, it really shines. Well, for the Rembrandt household, there's no way there won't be chances like this though.

… Ah, the time she was a ghoul huh. In the time she was inflicted with the curse disease, she wouldn't be able to accept invitations, and she wouldn't be able to welcome anyone as a representative. It's great that I remembered this before saying anything imprudent.

"Raidou-sama, sorry for making you, our benefactor, the bodyguard of my husband. It seems you are also taking care of our daughters at the academy, so it is like we are always asking you favors" (Lisa)

[Your daughters are exemplar, so I am not doing anything worthy of calling 'taking care'. From my side as well, the people in my company at Tsige are being taken care of]

"I will substitute you in the protection of my husband, so Raidou-sama, please go look after Sif and Yuno. The two of them will surely be happy. Also, it was called energy drink, right? The drink I received. Thanks to it, the fatigue I felt when I arrived at Academy Town disappeared as if a lie. Thank you very much" (Lisa)

[Glad to hear that. Ah, looks like it is about to begin]

"Ara, really. It seems I have arrived quite slowly. So embarrassing" (Lisa)

"This isn't such a stiff place anyways. No need to mind it. Well then, Raidou-dono. Sorry but, we will be heading to our seats first" (Rembrandt)

[Take your time. Please call me again when you are leaving. I will be at the guest seats]

Yeah. In this hall, since the beginning, the seats are divided, or more like, the places are divided.

I am not the relative of a student and have just received an invitation from a relative. That's why the treatment is a little different from them. I originally didn't plan on being a third wheel between the married couple, so this fits better.

I look at the back of the two that are linking arms. How affectionate.

Looking at the back of the married couple, I wished for my height to increase while receiving a drink from the waiter and mobilizing. The corner, the corner.

In the way, I pass beside a number of people Rembrandt-san presented me. While bowing slightly, we pass by each other. Are they also on their greeting rounds? How dedicated.

For me, the main objective right now is to spread the medicine and the management of the company, so things like… lobby activities? Groundwork? Creating connections? Well, I haven't really done much of those kind of things. I didn't think of it as necessary, but maybe it is.

If we are beginning a business in a new place, we don't just greet the guild, it is also an effective method to create individual connections with the merchants in the surrounding, the nobles, and the powerful people. It certainly does make sense.

If I had to talk about the connections I have made, it would be Rembrandt-san and… that priest would probably count as well. No, I feel like that can't be called a connection yet.

Yeah, it really is lacking.

In terms of inhyuman alignments, I have two superior dragons, the calamity spider, and well, if it's to the level of just talking, I have talked to Gods. How extravagant. In terms of antagonism, one superior dragon and one God (?). If we subtract, what's left are my retainers, one dragon and one spider huh <As in subtract one dragon and one god>. Well, I don't know if subtracting is okay in this case though.

Maybe I should try a bit more in creating connections at the hyuman side. The potential candidates are probably the two heroes and the people around them. As earthlings, there's the chance we can get along after all.

While thinking that, I look up. At the second floor seats. The place where the nations invited by the academy are seated in. If they have any business they will come down, but they normally just talk

among other countries. Even if they come down, it would just be a problem with the bodyguards. In the people that are chatting and dancing, there are probably some wishing for someone in the second floor to take an interest in them and getting a bite of that cake. <TL: gold diggers>

Oh.

The ones there are the Rembrandt sisters. Also, eh? Could it be, Amelia is also participating?

Make up and dress. Both of those become like magic, creating an incredible gap in their image. I normally only see those three running around, so it stands out even more, but the change is amazing.

I look at them from afar as they go around introducing themselves. Well well, watching them from here, they have a charm that would make me think they are not the same age as me. Sif is red, Yuno is a soft pastel color blue and Amelia a lustrous emerald green dress. The dress also varies. Sif has cloth even at her shoulders and the hem of the dress reaches close to her feet; a calm, no, it gives off a harmonizing sensation. Yuno has her shoulders exposed, and, from here I can't see too well but, her hem is short to the point that it barely covers her knees; quite daring. Amelia has a haler neck dress and it's the type that shows the line of her body beautifully. The three of them seem to not like parties that much, but they are showing a smile that doesn't lose to their dress while chatting with the people around.

The students here are really good at doing those kind of things naturally. I do think it is pretty impressive. Amelia is a scholarship student and was born in a normal household, so she must have learned all of it when she came here. I can't even see a trace of the girl that gives battle directions along with Jin.

I'm glad I'm looking at this from afar. If those three were to suddenly come to my side, I might get embarrassed and turn weird. Rembrandt-san must be looking at the sisters from a closer place. I can tell that his face has loosened up. And while at it, he is giving off a fearsome bloodthirst to the men that try to woo them. Well, if

only there were people that had so much guts as to woo others in front of their relatives that is. It's unthinkable for me, but in this academy, there are students that are already married and there are some that propose to teachers out of self-interest, so I can't say there are none.

Oh, it seems they noticed me. Well, we do have quite the distance so they won't come immediately. They didn't wave either. In exchange, the three of them directed a smile at me. I thought it was a bad idea to wave, so I lift my hand slightly higher than my shoulders and respond with a smile too. It didn't compare to the smile of those girls that gathered the attention of the surroundings though. Hah, I have to study a bit about this too.

After a while of not much happening and just looking at the state of the Rembrandt sisters and Amelia, the BGM changed. From the pain in the ears music that had no pace to it and has been playing in the hall till now, to one that you can feel the movement and flow. Ah, a dance accompaniment is probably like this.

There doesn't seem to be any tools to replay music, so it is most likely being played by a chamber music group. Live performance. Thinking about it that way, it does sound luxurious.

Obviously, the dancing started. For me who can't dance, it doesn't matter much. Rather, I want to eat something that's not appetizers and drinks. Even if I look at the dance, I would understand practically nothing anyways. Dango over blossoms <Food comes first>. Looking at beautiful people won't satisfy my stomach.

Ah right. If there's sliver of a chance someone invites me to dance, it might be difficult to refuse. Even if a say chance, it is practically none though.

Maybe I should move to a deeper corner.

Eh, what is it?

While just moving my eyes to see the second floor, I drink a sweet drink with my back to the wall. Maybe the surroundings are also resting, I can see a few people doing the same.

A scene that shouldn't be a problem (I think). And yet, the right side is being noisy.

A mass of unnatural people is approaching.

Well then, could it be guests for me? No, I don't know anyone who would gather this much attention…

?!!

Could it be, Root?!

Today I didn't make any arrangements with him though! Also, honestly speaking, I don't have the resolve to meet him today you know?!

Confusion begins to reign over me.

The moment I was thinking of escaping and was about to lift my back from the wall…

"It's Raidou-sama right? Could you please give us a bit of your time to talk?"

Who are these guys?

In the place where a bunch of heavy-looking escorts are present, the one who opened its mouth was a woman that looked docile at a glance.

Chapter 118: The wise and the Lorel Union

Hm…

Three demons huh. I don't know what bigshot of which country she is from, but if she has demons infiltrated in her own escorts, that's dangerous.
The woman that suddenly talked to me, looking at her heavily armed escorts she was bringing along, that's how I thought. In the past, I met the demon general Rona-san who was disguised. It is probably magic, but there are three demons that are most likely using the same spell and infiltrating the hyumans. Is it affecting the vision or is it affecting the perception, I wasn't told which it was, but whichever it is, it doesn't work on me. This time as well, I see them perfectly.
Their looks are completely different, so it is obvious. Just the skin color makes the difference clear.

"In this place it seems there's no need to mind about the public gaze and we can proceed smoothly"

"….."

Looks like this woman hasn't noticed that there's demons mixed in. If she really is using them while knowing full well about their identity, she would at least not bring them here in a place filled with international figures. It would be like bathing in gasoline and participating in a campfire.
In this world it is difficult to gauge the age by appearance, so this woman that has brought me outside of the party's main hall, I can't tell just how old she is or in what position she is in. I can tell she is an important person by the atmosphere of the surroundings.
The music that was played in the hall can be slightly heard in this salon-like place we are in. In the space with no people around, there's only me, the woman, and also the escorts.

“You guys, leave for a bit. Let’s see, if there are people trying to enter here, tell them to please not. Something like that”

Saying so, she points at the entrance. A pure white skin that even looks unhealthy, slender arms and legs that make you hesitate to grab them. If someone asked me what kind of person she is, I would without doubt answer: ‘a weak-looking person’. Also, it strangely makes me feel nostalgic. This should be my first time meeting her though…

[I am sorry. Since I a while I have been thinking but, no matter what, I can’t seem to remember you. Have we met somewhere before?]

It would be a problem if rumors run around that a teacher made a disturbance in an event, so I wanted to get this over with in a quiet manner and followed her all the way here. It looks like the other side knows about me, but I don’t remember her. That doesn’t feel right. Could it be she just one-sidedly knows about the company’s Raidou? Or did she learn about me from someone else? Well, it does seem she has some business with me to the point that she cleared out the people to speak with me.

“Written communication… Ah, no, this is our first meeting Raidou-sama. I was interested in you, that’s why I invited you in this way. When having escorts it just gets exaggerated, I am truly sorry. Please do forgive me for that, as it is something I can’t help because of my position”

A single word. With just that, she was able to accept written communication huh.
Information about me must be leaking around more than I thought huh. Well, it is better to have people know than to explain every time though.

[Now then, before enquiring about the reason of that interest, can you please tell me first the position you are in and your name? Not knowing the name of the other party when already facing face to face like this just doesn’t feel right]

“… You are right. I am from the Lorel Union and one of the people

taking care of the priestess-sama and kamuro, name is Sairitz. About our Lorel Union, how much does Raidou-sama know?"

Priestess and kamu… ro?
If my memory serves right, in Lorel, they are existences that are extremely important. The priestess is the fulcrum of the nation's spirit and the kamuro is one of the prospects. When hearing kamuro, my head writes it as 'baldness' which means a prostitute's apprentice though. But it seems the meaning here is a lot different. It is not about prostitutes and courtesans but about aiming to be a priestess. The impression is different. And, when talking about Lorel…

[Actually, I have never been there and I don't know much about it, but I know that it is the union of three regions to become a nation, and the person called priestess is a woman that possesses strong power and a person that is able to interact with several high spirits. I have heard that the words of the priestess have power even in political fronts, so in Lorel it is quite the status. Also, because the relationship is closer to spirits, the religion is stronger towards spirits than to the Goddess. What I know of it is that… they have a peculiar culture and excel in the crafts department]

It is famously known that Lorel possesses several unique techniques. Even if I say they esteem the spirits, that still ends up in being affiliated to the Goddess, so I haven't learned too deeply about it. Their techniques are highly skilled, and there's a symbol called priestess. My impression is on that level.

"… I am surprised. You really know well. You must have studied well. Have you thought about opening a business at our country as well?" (Sairitz)

[Of course, if it's allowed, I will in time. I have just begun my business, but I have big dreams]

"I see. At that time, please do give me a word. I will assist you" (Sairitz)

[Thank you very much]

The conversation stops. With a smile, the woman promises me her cooperation. While maintaining a gentle smile, she looks at me with narrow eyes as if gauging me. It feels like I am being appraised here. Looks like she doesn't mind my outward appearance, so maybe she is searching for anything she can find out. It feels like she is surveying every inch of my body.

Lorel Union.
It is one of the four major powers and a country I have never gone to. Different from the other three countries, the Union is a collection of several powers into one country. It seems the three small countries gathered under the name of the priestess. In terms of map location, it is at the south side of the golden highway we crossed, it is at the other side of the high mountain range where the Inland Sea should be. No problem in thinking of it as Shikoku.
Other aspects would be that they seem to possess a peculiar culture, but maybe because their national character is a closed one, there doesn't seem to be much information around. That's why their characteristic techniques and the existence of the priestess stands out even more.
Culture, priestess, highly skilled techniques. When hearing just its characteristics, I feel like it is similar to Japan. If the priestess is replaced for something like his Majesty the Emperor, then it would fit perfectly.
Maybe because there's three countries gathered, it's a nation that its race is not uniform. Their skin and hair color have quite the variations, and it seems there are few that mind it. It does hurt that there's not much information around, but it is a country I would like to visit at least once.

Oops. The issue right now is not that. It is about why she got interested in me. Is it me, or my store? That's the first thing that is in my mind.

"But there truly are curious things huh" (Sairitz)

The woman was the one who broke the silence. Being all smiles, I can't read what she is actually thinking. The power of readings memories, if it were to activate at this kind of moments, it would be very helpful!

[What is it you are trying to say?]

“You, who said that you have never visited Lorel Union, for some reason, are using something that only a few selected are taught” (Sairitz)

Something? Using? Lorel possesses highly skilled techniques, so maybe it is related to the eldwas?

“At the Kuzunoha Company’s sign, there are two characters written in it right?” (Sairitz)

Ah, well… I did write kanji in the wooden sign though.

“That’s the writing of the wise. From the four major powers, no, in this whole world, there’s only a few in Lorel that know of it. Why is it used in the name of your store I wonder?” (Sairitz)

Writing of the wise you say? That’s kanji and it’s used by us Japanese.

[That is one of the writings I have been using since small. It is indeed mysterious. I came from the border’s wasteland, but maybe someone from your country came to the border’s wasteland and taught the writing? It’s not like I know all the characters in detail you know. It’s also my first time hearing the name ‘writing of the wise’]

It was probably an otherworldler that came to this world and taught them kanji in a strange way. But I have the all-powerful and convenient word, wasteland. From my experience here, most of everything can be resolved by saying this. In a sense, I am being saved by the wasteland.

“An interesting opinion. But that’s impossible. In the case the people who know the writing of the wise, head outside the country, the information regarding it will be all recorded. From the people that have done so in the past, there’s not a single one who has travelled to the wasteland” (Sairitz)

What?! This is the first time she retorted. Also, records she says? In this world where most of everything is done sloppily? I am

surprised she can be so confident about its certainty.
Then, next hand.

[But I do know how to write it and am using it. Then it must have been someone you didn't know of that put his feet on the wasteland. In everything, you must prioritize the facts. As long as this fact exists, someone must have taught this writing]

"True. I have to accept the truth properly. Just as you said, there might be the chance the writing of the wise was taught at the wasteland. But I have a slightly different thought in mind" (Sairitz)

[Let's hear it]

"The writing of the wise, as the name implies, is the writing that the wise possess. In other words, if it's a clever and wise one, it wouldn't be strange for that person to know it from the very beginning" (Sairitz)

Wise she says. Could it be, as in sage?

[You are overestimating me. I am not so clever to be called a wise man. I am just a mere person that opened a store]

"… Raidou-sama. The wise differs a bit from the word sage. The wise possess impossible knowledge that's respected. We just call it that way" (Sairitz)

Eh? The turn of affairs is strange?

[I don't understand your meaning well]

"The wise is a general term used for people that are not even from this world and have come from a faraway place. What I think is that you are also a wise-sama. Am I right?" (Sairitz)

Wise stands for otherworldlers huh. What a troublesome name they have placed. It is an enclosed country that's why the details of it can't be fully understood just throughw documents, so well, can't be helped.
Kanji is the writing of the wise huh. That store name, I was thinking

about using it as a conversation starter for the time the heroes hear of it by word-of-mouth, so I didn't think too deeply of it. Who would have thought that the kanji already existed, moreover, it is pretty classified information. I do think kanji is a peculiar writing, but I don't really think it is such an important thing to be made classified information. Because you know, it is just writing. In a world where most places use the common language and numbers, I really don't think it should have that much value.
Anyways, it seems right now I am being suspected of being a wise huh. No need for doubts, that's actually true though.
What should I do? Admit it or feign ignorance. As long as I don't know the objective of this woman, I feel like feigning ignorance is the better choice.

"Ara, is there no answer? Also, there's another reason why I think you are a wise-sama. That is, your name. My name is Sairitz and the accurate writing is written like this" (Sairitz)

I maintain my silence (I was actually just thinking about how to handle it though) and without hurrying me, the woman named Sairitz stood up, walked to my side and placed a finger on the table. The slender finger shines and the kanji for color and ritz are written. She didn't actually use ink, it just followed the trace of her finger. Oh, it is written correctly. More than Japan, it's a name that might fit China better.

"And my family name is like this. It may be an unnecessary explanation, but it is read as Kahara. Kahara Sairitz, that's my full name. In Lorel, the wise-sama are greatly adored and most of the people have similar names. The name giving is done in the spirit temple, we call it Yashiro. There, many parents that have given birth to a child will go there to ask for names. They give out several options that fit the child, and the parents will decide on which, is how the custom goes" (Sairitz)

Hana and then hara, making it Kahara huh. So even the way it is read starts from the family name. Practically the same as Japan. To the point that I think the name Aya Tadashi doesn't sound female-like. The kanji is not spread widely, so when placing names, they leave it to the people related to the temple. She said it is called Yashiro, so it is probably someone like a Shinto Priest that uses the

knowledge to place some options. Even though they serve under the spirits and the Goddess, are the priests in Lorel allowed to study kanji? She did say only a few selected, so that may not be the case, but it must be troublesome.

“There are also times when the names of the wise are used exactly the same. That’s proof of how much those personage are respected and adored by the people, but the name Raidou-sama also resembles the names of our country, is what I think” (Sairitz)

…

“Also, your face features as well. It is thought that the wise-sama are people that are born from different seeds than us hyumans. The wise-sama, more than their appearance, what’s inside proves of more importance. There are records saying most wise-sama didn’t have a beautiful outward appearance” (Sairitz)

Oioi, is that true? There’s a country that has truly made contact with otherworldlers. Is that the reason why it is enclosed? Being all secretive about it, that’s not fair Lorel. Are the techniques also the result of the concepts of our world? The part where they are aware the hyumans and humans come from different seeds makes it sound pretty convincing. Leaving aside all that about the inside being more important than their appearance.

[Is it okay to tell such an important thing to someone like me? I am, you know, not a wise though]

“Are you misunderstanding us Raidou-sama? We think of sheltering the misfortunate wise-sama that receive unjust discrimination in this world” (Sairitz)

Misfortunate huh. From what I heard of Root, the people that came here from our world are mostly because of accidents. It seems they know quite a bit.

“It may be fine right now, but in time, you will face problems. If it’s Lorel, we will welcome you with open arms. We intend to do what we can for you” (Sairitz)

[This is a problem. It seems there really is no reason for me to be sheltered by you. If I find a wise-sama, I will suggest them to go to your country]

“… Looks like you won’t trust us huh. Understood. I will leave it at that for now. It isn’t something that can be rushed after all” (Sairitz)

Maybe she could tell that my attitude went stiffer, or maybe she thought the matter would not progress. She pulled back pretty easily.

“Right, Raidou-sama, there’s something I would like your opinion about. Is it okay?” (Sairitz)

[If you are fine with someone like me]

“The two heroes that the Goddess-sama uses. We think those two are also wise. Raidou-sama, what do you think of the heroes?” (Sairitz)

[A question I have no way of responding. I am sorry but, it seems my opinion will not be useful. I have never met them before, so there’s nothing I think of them]

Without bringing any dissatisfaction in my answer, Sairitz-san silently stood from her sit. Bowing once, she turns back and walks to the salon’s entrance.

“I see. Ah, right, right” (Sairitz)

After breathing out a big sigh of relief after being released from the tension, Sairitz-san talked to me. Without waiting for my response, she continued.

“Raidou-sama’s store sign, it’s lovely. The Kuzu referring to medicine and the Ha for the plants. Is your current strong point medicine?” (Sairitz)

[It’s the name of a plant, not the character for medicine. Well, it is not wrong to say that I want to spread medicine though]

“… As I thought, you know the writing of the wise well. Before

returning to my country, I would like to meet you again. Well then, excuse me” (Sairitz)

Ah.

Why is it? I feel like I have lost in some way.

There’s no reason to stay in the salon that has only me now. Let’s return to the hall.

Chapter 119: Various things locked-on

After returning from downstairs, Sairitz separated from her escorts and returned to the noble visitor's room.
A soft black rug is spread out in the room and the guests from various countries are divided in groups and amusing themselves with chats or in the balcony at the far back watching the events of the hall. Sairitz who came from Lorel Union, is one of the people in the highest positions. Before leaving the event, she returned to her assigned sit and a number of hyumans came to talk to her. While dealing with them in a skilled manner, she suddenly noticed something and turns her head to a certain direction.
Sairitz' eyes narrowed. In the place she felt a gaze, there was an unexpected person.

(The Empire's second princess Lily Front Gritonia. The being that backups the Empire's hero. After the appearance of the hero, she has left all her political power as if running away from it, and has been serving under him. Just that, as a person that has seen how she acted before, this was a turnover that brought suspicions. The vigilance around her surroundings has actually grown tighter than before the hero appeared, and investigating her current status is giving us a hard time. It can be said that it is an abnormal vigilance. For now, there's practically no interaction between me and her though. We haven't made any unnecessary contact with the hero at their side, and currently there's no plans to do so) (Sairitz)

After finishing one round of chats, Sairitz apologizes to the people around her and approaches Lily who is close to the balcony. Lily wasn't looking at Sairitz anymore, she was looking at the situation of the lower floor.

(They came huh, Lorel. I was thinking of ignoring them for a while since Tomoki's power didn't work on their priestess, and yet, they

are unnecessarily increasing my work load. To think that they would come in contact with the Kuzunoha Company. Don't joke around. Since the warning of that woman named Tomoe, even if she is just an employee of the company, it didn't sound like a joke. Tomoki who is preparing to invade, is infatuated with that woman, so I can't just ignore Kuzunoha Company completely. That unsightly man seems to be the owner Raidou, but there's the possibility that he is also the master of Tomoe. It is actually a time where I have to be acting together with Tomoki and the others, but if they are doing business so close by, I can't help but be interested. It would have been good if they just obediently stayed in Tsige. On top of that, you are telling me they have connections with the secrecy-filled Lorel? Geez, they are truly in the way. Such a hindrance, hindrance, hindrance, hindrance!!) (Lily)

On the other side, Lily knew of Sairitz approach. The reason she is looking at the lower floor is not a feint to Sairitz. She was checking out the state of Raidou who had returned to the hall.
For Lily, the Kuzunoha Company and the owner Raidou are a part of the reason she came to Academy Town. Tomoe, the strong swordswoman they met close to Limia Kingdom. That existence, not only became a big crack in the heart of the hero who is the strongest pawn of the Empire, but also on Princess Lily. For him, that was the first time he was treated in a cruel manner, on top of that, she possesses a sword he cannot unsheathe, even when he is able to use any magic tools. Lily took Tomoe's warning to heart, so she kept down the investigation of Kuzunoha Company to the minimum and has not interfered in any way. She has been able to control the attachment of Tomoki to Tomoe, and the reason why he has not gone to action is also because of her. Tomoe's existence is currently Lily's seed of distress, and she couldn't help worrying about the reason why the subject of that trouble is coming all the way to Academy Town.

"Lily-sama. How's it going looking at the hall? Did you find someone that picks your interest?"

"Oh, this is, Kahara-sama" (Lily)

"Using –sama, I don't mind if you call me without any honorifics. You are the princess of the Empire that's fighting with the demon

race at the frontlines after all" (Saritz)

"I have already resigned to my rights for the throne. Also, I am just a libertine person that has come to this kind of festival in this kind of time" (Lily)

"Just by supporting the hero you have enough dedication. I, no, we Lorel want to be lady's-" (Saritz)

"… Let's enter the real issue, Kahara-sama. Why did you, one of the authorities of Lorel Union, go through the trouble of going down and meet that man? I am interested" (Lily)

Lily's words stopped Sairitz flattery. The folding fan was hiding the lower half of Lily's face and her eyes were gently smiling. But Sairitz was able to sense that it was because she was unhappy that she said something like that.

"Man… Ah, that was a personal affair of mine. I heard from my subordinates that there's a store in this town that sells well-working medicine and peculiar fruits. 'He is an incredibly characteristic shopkeeper, so you will be able to tell it is him at a glance' is what they told me half-jokingly, but when I saw him a while ago, I was surprised. It was truly at a glance, moreover, from afar. That's why I unconsciously went to talk to him without thinking about my own position. I probably did something troublesome for him" (Sairitz)

"Fufufu, true. Even from here you can tell in an instant that's him, Raidou-dono" (Lily)

Lily's eyes perceive Raidou. And then, after ascertaining Raidou, this time Sairitz was the one who showed interest.

"… Lily-sama also knows about Raidou-dono?" (Sairitz)

"Yeah. On my side it is mostly from rumors though. Things like, their employees being almost all demi-humans, and that he is working as a temporary teacher in the academy. It seems he is quite the interesting one. I would also like to talk with him" (Lily)

"… I see, talk. So he is a temporary teacher too huh. Also, he is close with demi-humans…" (Sairitz)

(… She doesn't know much about him? Is this a bluff?) (Lily)

Seeing her face as if it's her first time hearing about his relationship with the demi-humans and that he is a temporary teacher, Lily ponders.

(For now, the Kuzunoha Company doesn't have traces of being in any other place aside from Tsige and Rotsgard. And this woman leaving her country is something that rarely happens. In that case, Lorel and Kuzunoha Company have enough connection to have her leave the country? Within that factor of uncertainty, the Kuzunoha Company currently doesn't hold much antagonism towards us. Investigating about the other uncertain factor, the Devil, might be better. The Devil, possessing quite the battle power and on top of that, holds connection with the Goddess. Moreover, no matter if it's hyuman or demon, it will kill them without distinction. Compared to that, the Kuzunoha Company is more of a neutral existence. Let's go with using a random country to investigate them thoroughly. If the Empire stands at the front, it might turn bad when Tomoe comes out) (Lily)

"If their medicine is really as good as they say, I was thinking about buying some as presents" (Lily)

"Ara, that's a good idea. If you want, can I ready Lily-sama's share too?" (Sairitz)

"There's no need to do so much" (Lily)

"There's no position as public as Lily-sama's after all. Also, I can't let a princess wait in that massive line" (Sairitz)

"… Understood. I will take your good will" (Lily)

(Is it because she doesn't want me to make contact with Raidou? Let's concede here for now. There's still things I want to hear from her) (Lily)

"Leave it to me. I will have it delivered to you in a few days" (Sairitz)

"I will be waiting. Changing the subject, can I please depend on that

good will once more? Actually, there's something I want to ask Kahara-sama about by all means" (Lily)

"To me? Because of my position, there are many things I can't answer about my country, so if you are fine with that" (Sairitz)

(What does she want to ask? She already has several information gatherers infiltrated and all) (Sairitz)

"Of course. I know that your country has developed strong characteristic techniques. Actually, our country has recently been interested in gunpowder. I was wondering if I could ask you about Lorel's management of gunpowder and its way of use" (Lily)

"Gunpowder huh. This is my first time hearing that your country is interested in such a thing though. If it's that, I can tell you as much as I know" (Sairitz)

(Gunpowder. How unexpected. There are dangerous ways to use it, but that's something that is far inferior to magicians. Well, it does give the impression of being unnecessarily dangerous though, but why… Let's teach her things that will not be an obstacle. Things that she most likely already heard that is. I will probably have to warn the people in charge of that to be careful) (Sairitz)

"Yes. As you see fit" (Lily)

(The interest of the Empire in gunpowder, if they learn of it, of course they will be cautious. In times, cautiousness actually exposes the place for information. Don't underestimate our intelligence force. I will have you fall to the eyes of Tomoki and make you devoted like our girls) (Lily)

While listening to the gunpowder's use and value that she already knows of, Lily and Sairitz' smiling confrontation continued.

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"Rembrandt, so you were here"

"Well well, if it isn't the shogun. If I knew you came, I would have come to greet you. If I remember correctly, the ones that should

have come to Rotsgard are the Ryujin household though?" (Rembrandt)

"Umu, I didn't have plans of coming here. There's a campaign regarding Stella Fort's strategy you see. In our way, it was just right in the time of the school festival, so as a rest for the march, we are stopping here. And well, I saw you. Today the butler is not here?"

"Yes. I brought my wife, so I have left the store matters to him" (Rembrandt)

"No guards huh. The Don of Tsige can't do that"

"No no, as a substitute I have brought someone reliable. It's the novice merchant from Kuzunoha Company I told you about before. Today I came with him" (Rembrandt)

Without denying that he is the head of Tsige, Rembrandt now understood the reason of why the Shogun made contact with him.

"… Fuh, I was going to advice you about that matter though. I see. You have tamed him well. I have heard that he is the type of guy that made this place his base and didn't want anything to do with my country after all"

'Are you holding the reins of Kuzunoha Company?' Rembrandt, who thought that was the reason why he came so suddenly, seems like he was right.
That's why he didn't deny the Shogun's own image of him being the head of Tsige, and while at it, tell him that he had Raidou come with him so he would misunderstand the power relationship between them.
The success of this can be understood from the answer of the Shogun of Aion.

"In the end he is a youngster. And actually, right now he is renting a space in my company and Kuzunoha Company is also in Tsige, so be relieved. Ah right, Shogun likes alcohol right? There's a woman there that brings pretty delicious alcohol. Well then, please hang around with me for a while. Come come" (Rembrandt)

“O-oh. Rembrandt, don’t urge that much. Sorry, madam. I will be borrowing your husband for a while”

“Don’t worry. After that, please do accompany me in one tune okay? I will be waiting” (Lisa)

Rembrandt’s wife, Lisa, sees off the two men that disappear into the crowd. With a full smile, she looked at the back of the Aion Shogun as it disappears. From the mouth of that madam, a small sigh leaks out. A small sigh that the people around wouldn’t be able to notice. Her field of view is now only of the other guests, and she doesn’t know anymore where her husband and the man, who called him out, have gone.

(Tamed him well, huh. A stupid one who doesn’t even know who’s the one being tamed. He even acted as if he didn’t notice me. He probably doesn’t even notice that he was dragged away so that he doesn’t point that lecherous gaze to our daughters) (Lisa)

Lisa didn’t exchange a single word with her husband, but she understood the conversation a few moments ago and the reason of her husband’s actions. Even when he is in one of the highest positions of Aion, he is actually an idiot that got his position by heredity. On top of that, he finds women here and there and makes them his wife.

(I am confident in my ability to hide my feelings in my face, but even I showed a dumbfounded face at that time. Seeing his son courting Sif, he also tried courting her and making her his wife after all. So shocked. A father and son fighting over a woman, how disgusting) (Lisa)

Lisa remembers a past memory. In the time when her daughters Sif and Yuno were healthy, there were quite a lot of marriage proposals. When they became students at the academy, the amount increased even more. The son of the man that called out was also one of them. It is one of the memories she wants to forget.

“Eh? Only mama is here? Where’s papa?”

“Yuno, say Oka-sama or mother. Be careful with how you talk. If

you are unable to do that, I will have to discipline you at home as well, got it?" (Lisa)

"Ugh! I will be careful, Oka-sama" (Yuno)

"Good" (Lisa)

"Oka-sama, the one just now, if I remember correctly, that's Aion's…"

"That's right, Sif. The parent and child that proposed marriage to you. It seems he stopped here to rest while in their march to Stella. Right now when he is being kept away its okay, but be careful" (Lisa)

"… Yes. By the way, where's Raidou-sensei?" (Sif)

"He was led that way by Lorel's… probably an important person related to the priestess-sama, but he most likely returned already. Even though you did your best dressing up, too bad. It seems Raidou-sama is not used to this kind of places" (Lisa)

"Yeah. It is true that Raidou-sensei hasn't been taught etiquette and dancing after all" (Yuno)

Yuno says this words with a wry smile. Even she, who is normally vigorous, is wearing a dress, done her hair, showing her nape and having a complete change in her atmosphere. Her light manner of speaking actually gave an out of place sensation instead.

"Fufufu, he did see it, so ask him his impressions later. That's kind of an advance for those type of men. Also, Yuno and Sif" (Lisa)

"What is it?" (Sif)

"What?" (Yuno)

"It seems you girls have been playing around in the Academy in quite the flashy way huh? The Rembrandt's name doesn't have that much of a good reputation around here you know?" (Lisa)

"?! Y-You investigated?"

“Of course. With just your grades, I can’t tell how you live here after all. It seems that you have become obedient when you returned, but looks like in the past you were quite the pair” (Lisa)

“Uuh”

The two who gathered the attention of people, curl up and make themselves small.

“… Maybe I should tell Raidou-sama” (Lisa)

“Stop!”

Sif and Yuno’s voice splendidly overlapped. Their grim expression also matched.

“Then that bad reputation, turn it around by the time you graduate. Got it? Turn it around okay? Turn around your bad reputation. This is quite hard to do. People like to look down on others more than they value them after all. This will definitely help you in the future as well, so do it to your utmost. Come on, if you understand, hurry and go back!” (Lisa)

“Y-Yes!”

The words of Sif and Yuno’s mother pushed the back of them, and they returned to the brilliant place. The two of them share the same feelings. The first is of course, the embarrassment of having Raidou learn of their past behavior, and then, the fear of Raidou knowing that and doing something incredibly scary to them in order to correct them. For some reason, in their minds, there’s no thoughts of him abandoning them, get scorned by him or things like that. More than that, their fear of him doing something to them might be prove of their trust to him, or maybe his classes have numbed something inside them.
Lisa looks at Raidou who is casually leaning to the wall. As if he were thinking about something, and at the same time not thinking about anything. Seeing the figure of her unpredictable benefactor, the madam unconsciously smiled broadly.

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“Thanks for today, Raidou-dono. Thanks to you I was able to bask in the figure of my dressed up daughters”

Rembrandt gives his gratitude to Raidou with a smile.
In the way back, the night was still at its early stages. It can be said that the festival’s night has only just started. About now, the students that were participating are most likely hearing their grades and rejoicing or despairing. That they are able to smilingly return must be a privilege of the invited. About his daughters, they have been given a new task by their parents and have been rendered unable to return with a smile.

[On my side as well, I was able to meet a lot of people. Thank you very much]

“How were my daughters? Were they able to make your eyes rejoice?” (Lisa)

The madam asks Raidou about his evaluation of her daughters’ appearance.

[They were incredibly beautiful. They were totally different compared to the times in my class, and more than rejoice, it surprised me]

“Hahaha! A beauty that surprises. Raidou-dono truly gets it!” (Rembrandt)

Just like an over-doting parent, Rembrandt puts extra meaning to Raidou’s words and praises his daughters.

“Dear… Those girls as well as Raidou-sama would be looking at it, so I seriously selected the outfits. As a mother, I feel relieved” (Lisa)

[Those words are wasted on me, madam]

“By the way, Raidou-dono, I haven’t presented you to him but, actually, the Aion Kingdom’s Shogun came” (Rembrandt)

The smile disappears from Rembrandt’s face and the merriness in his voice is gone as he talks to Raidou who is walking at the front.

[The Shogun-sama of Aion Kingdom is?]

“Yeah, it seems he is in the middle of his march to Stella Fort. He asked me about you, so I told him that I have tamed you well. You are a popular one huh. Looks like Lorel Union has taken an interest in you too” (Rembrandt)

[Thanks. You were watching that. It seems they heard about my popularity with medicine and asked me if I wanted to open a store in Lorel. Right now I have my hands full with Tsige and here, so I declined]

“How impressive. Just the fact that you already have an offer for your next store. But in those cases, be careful of your footing, there might be a pitfall” (Rembrandt)

[Thanks for the advice]

“Dear, Raidou-sama has Tomoe-sama and Mio-sama, and also the one called Shiki-sama as well” (Lisa)

“Oh right. I unconsciously said something unnecessary. Sorry for being so nosy, Raidou-dono” (Rembrandt)

[No, don’t mind it. I am truly happy to see your care]

“… Raidou-dono, you see, lately, I have been witnessing the progress of Tsige every day. What I am going to say isn’t just from my feelings of gratitude. In the future, no matter what kind of enemy you make, I will stand by your side. As our benefactor and as a merchant as well. That is my decision. That’s why, when you are troubled by something, don’t hesitate to say it. I will become your strength” (Rembrandt)

When Rembrandt finished what he said, Raidou who was walking in front of him, stopped his feet.
There’s two reasons. The first is because of the gratitude he felt from the words of Rembrandt. And the other reason is because of what was in front of his vision. Several students in their uniforms. They were clearly showing hostility. And it was precisely directed at Raidou.

Rembrandt also noticed that abnormality and stopped his feet.

“Oi, Raidou”

[I don’t remember giving any student permission to call me without honorifics. I am certainly Raidou, but are you calling me in that way fully knowing that I am a temporary teacher?]

“Of course. I won’t let you say you have forgotten about me. I, who was almost killed by you”

Raidou tilts his head. Because he is a student he doesn’t remember at all.
If he said almost killed, he thought that maybe he was one of the students participating in his class. But when thinking about the students that are currently in his course and the students that have been injured in his class, there wasn’t anyone who had any wrath.

[Sorry. I don’t know you]

“?!! Don’t joke around!”

[I’m not joking. I don’t have a single clue. But, if I did something, let me apologize. I am sorry. As you can see, I am in company right now. If you have complains, I will hear them tomorrow at the store. Well then]

“You!! Do you really not remember me?!”

[Are you a student that came to my class? I don’t think you were there though]

“There’s no way I would go to your class!! I see, class, the class! Your class, right now there’s only seven left right? Also, there’s no petitions to join right? It’s because I am putting pressure, so that’s obvious though!”

Raidou was troubled.
The man in front of him was emphasizing the matter so much to the point he was foaming. If he really was close to dying, there’s no way Raidou wouldn’t remember it. But, it is true that he remembers a bit of him. Actually, he even feels like this isn’t their first time

meeting.
Also, about the class, right now he has been receiving a massive amount of petitions. Just that he is not accepting them. He was thinking about letting the seven teach the newcomers when they are a bit stronger, but in a long term perspective it would take time, so he doesn't intend to increase the number of students right now. And that's why there are seven. He really didn't understand this man more and more.

[I told you I will listen to you tomorrow. Let me tell you something. These people are one of the guests of honor. If students put a hand on them, you know what will happen right?]

Exchanging looks with Rembrandt, Raidou passes to his side. Maybe the warning worked, they didn't show signs of putting their hands on the couple.

"… I can't forgive you! I will definitely make you regret making an enemy out of me! In the tournament tomorrow, I will first crush the bunch that are taking your classes. No matter the way! It will spread in an instant the fact that you are incompetent!"

[I see. Do whatever you want]

Raidou continues with his back turned, writing to the man that is still clamoring. The jeering continued, but Raidou didn't listen to him anymore.

"R-Raidou-dono. The students just now, I think they said something about hurting my daughters though" (Rembrandt)

[Yeah, it seems so. Please don't worry. This is instead going to turn into good training for them. Also, there's not a one in a million chance they will be hurt]

Calming the couple, Raidou guided them to their lodging.
No matter how hard he thought of it, he couldn't remember who in the world he was. There's no doubt he met him in the time he was in Academy Town, so when Raidou returned to the company, he talked to Shiki about it.
In the small space of time Shiki was thinking, he stayed silent.

“Waka, maybe it is that?” (Shiki)

“Did you remember something? I don’t remember at all” (Makoto)

“Yeah. It was something that happened soon after we arrived here. The students that were messing with Ruria from Gotetsu, and we punished them” (Shiki)

“Oh, now that you mention it. I saved her on a whim. But he said he was almost killed you know? I think that was only on the level of scaring them a bit though” (Makoto)

“They were falling at that height and down was stone paving, so there was a slight chance to die. Most importantly, none of them were able to float” (Shiki)

“… Right. So it is that. That is the ‘almost killed him’ huh” (Makoto)

Raidou droops his shoulders heavily and sighs. Because he was exhausted after realizing that guy was making all that racket and calling it ‘almost dying’, how exaggerated. Compared to what he experienced when he came to this world, that was nothing.

“Just in case, I will investigate about those students tomorrow. I did promise Jin to accompany him after all” (Shiki)

“I see. The raffle of the tournament, was it? I will also peek at it with Root. At that time, can you please make some time with Jin and the others? I have to warn them that they might get harassed” (Makoto)

“Warn them?” (Shiki)

“Yes, warn them. If they are unable to deal with those kind of things on their own, they can’t be relied on after all. In the staff room, people have told me several times if I wanted to increase my number of students. I don’t have to abide to that, but it has turned into being stuck between a rock and a hard place, and I feel a bit of pity towards the staff members. When those seven grow to a certain extent, I plan on using them to educate and it would save some trouble” (Makoto)

Shiki nods silently at Raidou's words.

(Well then, let's go to the store where Tomoe and Mio, as well as the unnecessary extra, Root, are waiting. I have to ask them what they have done today after all. They must be planning on drinking loads, and tomorrow I will be together with Root. There still much more to go, let's psyche up!) (Makoto)

It was a long day. Raidou leaves the company while smiling wryly.

Chapter 120: The mini-storm before the storm

We are standing out.
Tomoe and Mio wearing kimonos, and also the beautiful youth Root wearing a pure white suit. No well, in public he is calling himself Falz it seems. Oh well, no problems if I just call him Guild Master.
Anyways, being with three people like that, even I stand out more than necessary.
I am aware that people are not thinking about a double date when looking at this composition of two men and two women. First of all, Root is perfectly beside me, so the composition is slightly strange.
And because of it, Mio, who is walking a bit further behind, is quite angered.
It seems she lately, not only screams or tries to attack, but has learned to also get angry in silence and watch with cold eyes. I don't really need a growth in the variations of anger though.
The four of us are heading to the event that is grabbing the attention of everyone, the raffle of the martial arts tournament.
Right now it is not the main part of the event today, and yet, the number of people is incredible. The path I normally thought of as wide, right now, it is taking me my all just to walk.
The tournament is actually beginning tomorrow. Thinking that way, I can tell that the number of people will increase even more compared to today, which is only to debut the students participating in the tournament.
Quite the ability to attract customers. I can understand why placing a selling cart here costs a lot more than in other roads.
Looking at this amount of people, I honestly thought that it was great the Kuzunoha Company didn't put a selling cart as well.
Seems like I still need that resolve as a merchant huh.

"This is quite nice. Walking alongside the person you like, like this"

"Please lay down the pervert remarks, Master-dono" (Makoto)

“How cold~. I was sincerely confessing my feeling though” (Root)

“Also, the eyes in the surrounding hurt, so can you please stay further away?” (Makoto)

“This is a due privilege. I don’t have any intentions to give it away or withdrawing it. Today I have all morning free, so it is fine to look around with whoever I want” (Root)

Yareyare. Maybe Root has been accumulating stress for being called here and there every day by guests.
Last night, when I returned, the three of them were splendidly drunk. I was wondering this at that time in Gotetsu but, why is it that every single one of them gets drunk in the school festival? Root should be immune to alcohol as well, but he had a slightly red face and was laughing. They were practically drinking till morning, and it seems that they were having a match on who would be beside me.
It would be quite the problem if they fought upfront, so even if I say match, they decided on a peaceful way. At first, I thought about deciding it with a *rock, paper, scissors – hit and put on -*, but the part about hitting worried me, so I changed it to ‘look that way’. What a great choice of me. And so, the winner was Root. It is certainly true that his privilege is justifiable. The two that loss are walking behind us, alongside each other.

And yet, for some reason, when I clear my ears to listen to the surroundings, I can hear people saying that Root is bringing along two girls to watch the participants, and that he was forced to have me accompany him. What false accusations. Totally false accusations. Are you telling me the difference in appearance is so big that they are ignoring the fact that he is walking alongside me? Fuh~, I can’t handle the hyuman’s messed up sense of value. They should look at the situation more honestly.

“So, Lorel really has learned kanji? In that case, maybe they know Japanese to a certain extent” (Root)

“They call it ‘the writing of the wise’. It seems they have some part

of Japanese inherited, but it has changed quite a bit and can already be called something different" (Makoto)

"A change on the level of a dialect?" (Root)

"Not on that level. Ehm, a right, there's a good example. Like the Latin language we have in Earth" (Makoto)

"… What is that?" (Root)

"It means that it works for a certain part of people, but it is normally considered the language of scholars. When writing it in a document, there's the chance a part of the people will understand it" (Makoto)

"… That's a word I totally don't know of. You, just what kind of Japanese did you make contact with?" (Root)

"Well, I am always told I am normal, including you" (Makoto)

Uh, I am really supposed to be in the normal category though. About Latin language, I only know of the name. That should be normal.

"And in conclusion, is there the chance that they understand Japanese if it's spoken to them?" (Makoto)

"So you decided to stop thinking about it again huh. You better fix that habit of yours. Think about the questions properly and find your own kind of answers. Leaving aside if it's correct, the regrets are few. About the Japanese you are worrying about, there's no problem. As long as the heroes don't teach it, there's no chance for this world to learn Japanese. Lorel is using a special thought transmission to talk with guests of another world after all. Also, in most cases and in a short amount of time, they are able to use common language with the blessing of a spirit" (Root)

"A special thought transmission huh" (Makoto)

Have they been living with Japanese to the point that they have developed a technique of it? If you are thrown into an unknown world, you won't know left from right. Having a place that

welcomes you is a good thing that's for sure but…

"By the way, the knowledge of Lorel's magic is being used as a basis for the highly efficient thought transmission of the demon race. Since you made contact with a demon general, as expected, you are interested" (Root)

"Y-Yeah" (Makoto)

Is that so? I was thinking about something totally different though. But well, it seems he really does know quite a few things. And he hasn't told the hyumans about it. He is probably leaking a bit of information, but as always, he is one person I don't understand his objective.
He said he treasured the world, so he made the adventurer guild. But he said he 'treasured it' in past tense. Might just be how he phrased it though, however, strangely, it still remains in my mind. The question of, what is Root treasuring now? If I asked him, I feel like he would answer with a: "It's you", so I don't have much expectations though.

"Talking about something in my mind…" (Makoto)

"Waka-sama! This, I just picked it up, but it is delicious. If it's okay with you, please try it"

Mio. She was walking and eating as if she had 8 hands to hold everything, but if she selected a specific one out of all, I am interested. Well, she did go through the trouble of bringing it to me, so let's accept it.

"Thank you Mio. Your recommendations are always jackpots, so I am happy" (Makoto)

"Yes!" (Mio)

She happily gives me a stick-shaped wrapping. In the reverse triangle container, there were a lot of orange colored things the size of a thumb. There's a fragrant scent of oil. Deep-fried huh. I bring one that has a toothpick to my mouth.
In the crisp outside coating, there's meat inside. The light fleshiness

is close to that of white meat. A good tasting meat juice and a characteristic meat sensation. Maybe they minced several meats together? From the coating, I can smell several spices, and it complemented the taste of the meat. And then, the exquisite balance in the salt sprinkled over.
This is delicious.
For me, I thought it would be better if they put lemon juice, or some kind of juice to accent the taste. The taste is good as it is, good enough to call it one of my favorites though.

“Heh~, looks tasty. Mio-chan, where’s my share?” (Root)

“No way I have it, you pervert. I don’t remember giving you permission to call me with –chan. AAAhh?!” (Mio)

“Ah, Raidou-dono, I borrowed your toothpick. Fumu, heh~, this is… the meat is common, but this is the first time I have tasted this method of cooking. Yeah, it’s delicious” (Root)

“… Do you want to die this instant? Or do you want to die this instant?” (Mio)

Mio, you are saying the same thing. The toothpick I had was taken by Root in one breath and he stole one of the meats that was inside the container. What quick work.

“It has such a nice smell, so forgive him for taking only one, Mio. Thanks to you I have been able to find another food I like so much after all” (Makoto)

“You like! Then, next time, I will be lining it up in the dining table as well. I will show you that I can-desu wa!” (Mio)

“I will be looking forward to it. Ah, at that time-“ (Makoto)

“I will try using lemon salt or juice to put on scent to it. That’s how you like it right?” (Mio)

“… Yeah” (Makoto)

How did she know? Did it show in my expression? I’m a bit embarrassed.

“…”

“Master-dono, what are you staying silent for?” (Tomoe)

Tomoe, who was munching all this time, voices out. Is it because Root is unusually silent? Tomoe has been 20% eating and 80% drinking. Today again, she is already drunk. Her time here has been drinking in the morning and finishing the day with more drinking after all.
Great to see she is enjoying it.
The composition of two in the front, two at the back has now changed into Mio, me, Root and Tomoe.

“I was just remembering something. A long time ago, my lover told me that he wanted to eat fried white meat. There was a time I used this meat to painstakingly cook. He praised me saying that the taste was really similar… It pained me” (Root)

“He praised you right? Then, weren’t you happy?” (Tomoe)

“I was aiming for the same taste. I was unable to fulfill his wish. It pained me. You also wouldn’t want to be called ‘samurai-looking’ or ‘samurai-like’, but ‘a samurai’ right?” (Root)

“… I see” (Tomoe)

“Ah, Waka-sama. That cart, want to check it-“ (Mio)

“Okay, that’s as far as you go. The losers shouldn’t steal the march on the winner, Mio-chan. Tomoe also, step back. Today, I am the one beside him. Even in the venue, you two should understand your standing” (Root)

“Ku”

“Tch”

We already arrived at the venue huh. Shiki is supposed to be here already. When I am together with this three, the time passes fast.
I was also able to see a fun combination play of Tomoe and Mio.
Last night and today, Root hasn’t made a pass on me yet. I pray that he doesn’t do it because he thinks about the place and the members

Tomoe and Mio.
In the venue, there might be people that know of Root as the Guild Master. Today he isn't coming because of his standing, but for private matters. Even if they ask, he can just introduce me as a friend or something.
I am interested in how my cute students are doing. I don't think they are being too hyped up in just the raffle of the tournament. Well, if on the contrary they were un-hyped, I can meet with them for the sake of hyping them up.

And so, we enter the venue.

Chapter 121: Conditions and follow-up

“Hohoh~ so these are Waka’s students. Oh, those two there, I have seen you in portraits. You must be the daughters of Rembrandt-ja na” (Tomoe)

“Y-Yes! Nice to meet you. My name is Sif Rembrandt!” (Sif)

“I’m the little sister Yuno Rembrandt! Nice to meet you!” (Yuno)

“Nice answer-ja. As expected of the Rembrandt household-ja no. This is our first time meeting face to face, but we are-“ (Tomoe)

“Kuzunoha Company’s Tomoe-sama and Mio-sama right? I have heard about you from father. I am honored to meet you” (Sif)

We entered the venue and asked Shiki the place where Jin and the others are and headed there.
Root originally planned on coming with us, but he used the excuse that he forgot work he had to do and that he would be yielding me to Tomoe and Mio. Even I can tell that he was lying. He clearly found someone, and to meet with that person, he separated.

That guy, he has some objective. No doubt that’s one of the reasons why he is talking to me. But there’s clearly other reasons he hasn’t told me about.
If I am able to ask the core of the matter, he might tell me. On the contrary, if I were to ask him what he is planning, what is his objective, or vague things like that, he would definitely not tell me.

Anyways, after separating from Root, I brought Mio, who is at my left, and Tomoe, who is at my right, to where Shiki and the students are.
And so, Tomoe is looking at the students I give classes to in an amused way.

The seven, no, excluding the Rembrandt sisters; the five probably felt uncomfortable by the gaze of Tomoe. This is their first time meeting Tomoe and Mio after all.

“I hope he didn’t call me greedy though. But I am happy that you know my name. Leaving aside Mio, I am not in Tsige that much” (Tomoe)

“Father said the two of you are the pillars that support Raidou-sensei and the Kuzunoha Company”

“That man, he does get it huh. Leaving aside that I am being put in the same standing as Tomoe-san, he understood that we are the two pillars, so I will let it slide” (Mio)

Mio, what a visible antagonism there. Or this is some new kind of bullying to Shiki? She seems to be looking at Shiki for some reason after all.

“Compared to the two, I am still inexperienced. It’s because Mio-dono is managing the administration in Tsige and Tomoe-dono is doing the foreign businesses that I am able to study under the tutelage of Raidou-sama. I am grateful” (Shiki)

Shiki talks as if answering to Mio’s gaze, and lowers his head with a smile.
Mio has made Tsige her base and every day she is been going back and forth from there to Asora while learning cooking. And she is just supporting the adventurers at whim. I haven’t really heard about her actually being involved in the company work.

Tomoe has been going here and there looking for the four seasons. Well, she does gather information of the various areas with the Forest Onis but… foreign business?

In my opinion, regarding the company’s administration and decision making, there’s actually more times that Shiki ends up teaching me.

And to say that Mio is doing the administration in Tsige, Tomoe is in charge of foreign business, and I am the one teaching.

Shiki, you don't have to go so far to mind us. If you don't release all that pent up stress, you will end up exploding like the time with Lime. Let's be careful.

Ah, now that I mention information gathering. The winged-kin said that they wanted to do what the Forest Onis are doing as well. The Forest Onis are doing well, but the numbers are lacking. Also, the winged-kin –just as the name implies- can fly, so they have the plus that they can go to places the Forest Onis can't.
If there were only plusses, there would be no wavering in having them help, but the problematic point is that they have lower specs compared to the Forest Onis. Also, the fighting power is currently higher on the Forest Onis.
The general purpose of the previously mentioned can be liquidated by dividing the works. The winged-kin, in exchange of being able to fly in the sky, are not that suited for places like seas, watersides and wetlands. It's not to the point that they are unable to enter them, but their abilities are clearly restricted. Also, in the depths of the forest and the insides of mazes, the Forest Onis can move a lot better. On the contrary, in wide spaces like plains and mountainous areas, the winged-kin are better.
About the winged-kin, I am talking about their average capability, but it should be okay if I just appoint the elites. Just that, it is difficult to differentiate their merits. Dividing them just for the color of their wings actually brings inconveniences. Probably in the environment they have been living in, there will clearly appear merits, however, only looking at their abilities in that area will most likely bring the differences in unsuitableness… Yeah. Next time, let's have a detailed talk with them. In addition to having those guys do that boot camp as well.

[Jin, Amelia, Daena, Misura, Izumo. This is the first time you meet them. The ones I am counting on as both of my hands are Tomoe, and Mio]

"Tomoe-ja. Nice to meet you"

"I am Mio"

So short. Mio-san, that's not even an introduction.
Even so, the students answered the two of them with respect.

Maybe they are just doing the same as Sif and Yuno, who introduced themselves first. They probably can't tell just how much power Tomoe and Mio have after all. There isn't that majesty when looking at them, and they are good at hiding their powers too.

"… Uhm, sensei. You said both hands but, what about Shiki-san?"

Amelia. Maybe because she idolizes Shiki, her tone is a bit low.

[Just like they said, Shiki is still in the middle of learning. Just that, in the business side, he is one of the persons I trust the most. But in terms of dangerous dealings, in other words, transportation and supply, where the fighting power and self-defense abilities are taken into account, it is certainly true that he is lacking compared to this two]

"Fighting… power?"

"Shiki-san is lacking?"

"… This is a nightmare"

Daena-san and the other three of them seem to be imagining something scary.
Just that, it looks like they don't hold much doubts in what I just told them. Maybe that's the result of my unusual training.

"Well, it might be hard to understand quickly with your common sense. Even so, if you are receiving the teachings of Waka, you must know that the numerical value of levels is not what determines the victor, right?" (Tomoe)

"…"

The five nod. The Rembrandt sisters nodded a breath faster than everyone else. Ahaha, looking at this, Rembrandt probably told them about Tomoe and Mio's levels. In that case, maybe about my level as well. This is something that almost everyone in Tsige knows. The two of them are a lot more famous than me.

"Even at that numerical value, Mio and I overwhelm Shiki though. Well, what I am trying to say is, don't use that as your basis for

strength. This isn't something that can always be relied upon you know? For example; in the things I have experienced, I have known a level 1 hyuman that has easily defeated two people that surpass level 1,000" (Tomoe)

"?!!"

"That's not a lie you know. Fufufu. I feel like I understand why Waka and Shiki mind you guys. How charming and amusing. I will be looking forward to your matches" (Tomoe)

"… Hah~. I don't understand it at all. No matter how I look at it, they are only chicks that have barely peeked their heads out of their eggs. The matches of these people, I think it will only turn into looking at their bodies though" (Mio)

"Yareyare, it would be good for you to learn the happiness of teaching. Tomorrow just go around the carts eating obediently. Don't go displeasing Waka" (Tomoe)

I feel like the happiness of bullying the Forest Onis is slightly mixed in what Tomoe said. But, I am happy that she understands the fun of teaching. Because there's less people that just look down on people that are inexperienced.

"There's no way I would do something like that!" (Mio)

Mio might also understand a bit, if there comes a time when she teaches someone. Right now, she is still being taught and is concentrating in bettering her skills after all.
From what I have heard of Ema, even if you leave the preliminary arrangements to someone else, the cooking is basically done by the person, or so it seems. When she helps and teaches, I feel like Mio might change once again.

[Don't fight in this kind of place, you two. Learn a bit from Shiki. Shiki, did you tell them about that matter?]

Feeling like they were about to begin something, I stop both Tomoe and Mio by calling out their names. Most of the reason why I came today was to warn my students. Since I told Rembrandt that there

wasn't a million of a chance, I should warn them properly.

"Yes. From what I have investigated, that student was Limia's Hopelace household's second son. Hopelace has blood relatives of the royal family. In Limia, they are big nobles that can enter the top three. Because he is the second son, he doesn't inherit the family head, but since we are in times of war, he is being treated as the one who comes after the eldest son" (Shiki)

[Well, isn't that quite the big-shot. His actions didn't match that position though]

A household who has strong aristocratic power in Limia Kingdom, and big nobles huh. Moreover, the second son. If the head and the eldest son participate in the war, there's the chance they will lose their lives. In that case, he wouldn't just be a tool in political marriages.
Normally, it would suffice by just having the second son, third son and so on do the job, but because of pride, duty and ties of obligation, it seems they can't do that. The hero that went from the democratic principle Japan to the Limia Kingdom, might actually be having hardships. The usual things don't work like that there after all.

I see. So he is quite the big-shot huh. Limia's Hopelace household. If they are prominent nobles, they should just have them educated in their own country.
… I was thinking about having Jin and the others deal with whatever came, but it seems the situation has changed a bit.
If he uses something that has way too much difficulty, I will deal with it. Things like using money to employ a brutal assassin or using poison of some kind of rare plant.

"Raidou-sensei really gets involved with troublesome people a lot huh"

That Jin. Can you please stop those eyes of 'I have gotten used to this as well'?

[Jin. That unfaltering attitude is truly good. I think you have already heard but, the harassment that you receive, you will have

to cope with it. Also, it seems everyone passed the preliminary contest but, I hope you didn't go all out]

"Of course no. We all passed with only half of our strength"

Oh. Everyone is pushing their chest out. I expected it, but it seems that they didn't have to fight with their all in the preliminary contest. The people that participated in it have quite the high level, but well, that's obvious.

[Splendid. Well done, everyone]

"…"

[What is it? Aren't you happy?]

"Normally, when sensei praises us, there's something else"

…
They are being pretty cautious of me huh. I probably went with the same pattern too much since the Blue Lizard-kun. Well, even so, I can't suddenly change. I also want to watch how they fight in the festival and decide if I can add more students, so I should be a bit strict.

It is a bit sad to take this kind of attitude after praising them though.

[You have good intuition. Well, I have not been watching the other students in detail, so for the preliminary contest, I mostly heard about you guys from hearsay. Even so, I could clearly tell that you guys were being way too overconfident]

"…"

[And so, I have decided to establish a restriction on you guys. Shiki will tell you what point each of you have to follow by thought transmission later. Follow those and enter the finals]

In this school festival where there are a lot of visitors, they won't begin the tournament by doing the preliminaries of the people that want to participate. In the time of the preparation period, the

preliminaries were already done. They first have to show their abilities to the academy in order to even be shown to the visitors.

In that point, Jin and the others were able to show enough ability and were able to advance. As expected, they wouldn't mess up in the first step, so I didn't go watch.
I had Shiki tell the students, in order, the prohibited points. In their stiffening faces, there were some who also ended up yelping.
But to show your all in a place that gathers this much attention isn't advisable, so this time, I will have them show me their way of fighting when bound.

"… Uhm, are you serious?"

[Of course. There isn't a single speck of joke. The matches from tomorrow on, I will be watching them. Looking forward to it]

I have done what I came here for.
Tomoe's suggestive smile and Mio's glance.
I leave Shiki to look after them, just like he has been doing. I want to confirm what kind of cards that big noble will be playing.
After Lorel and Aion, now comes Limia huh. At this rate, I feel like Gritonia will be coming next. I hope not.
I expected things would happen, but I didn't think things would happen every day. If the four major powers line up, my stomach won't be able to take it.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

"Shiki-san, wait!"

"Raidou-sensei was serious right?"

"He was serious. Those weren't the eyes of someone joking"

"Scary. As I thought, that person is scary!"

"Sensei could have said a few words about yesterday's party…"

"Just like what Oka-sama said. If we don't move ourselves, we might not be able to hear his impressions"

I agree with almost everything said. But, you two from the Rembrandt household. Aren't you lacking tension?
When I thought why the idiot Hopelace made such a sudden declaration of war the other day, Sensei easily told us that he had troubles with him, moreover, he told us to deal with the pressure and obstruction of a noble by ourselves. On top of that, he told us not to go all out in the final selection.

No, that's not it. He is telling us to do our best and not to go all out. He really is an unconventional person to the core.
Normally, people would connect the evaluation of the students in the tournament with the evaluation of the teacher. That's why, there will be people saying: ' win no matter what happens', but there's none that would go and put restrictions.
It's a tournament you know? There are cases when people even continue talking about it in the coming year. It's a tournament that has at stake the grades and credits as well as the employment.

Could it be, he is already being pressured by the Hopelace household and the Kuzunoha Company is already experiencing inconveniences, so as a part of that guy's harassment, he had Sensei put limits to our abilities?
… Nope, don't think so. This time's pressure and everything else, seemed as if he was looking forward to how we would deal with it.
This might be… quite the critical moment. The critical moment which will decide the course I currently wish.

"Jin, what did he tell you not to do?"

"Don't 'dual-wield'. And Amelia?" (Jin)

"Don't 'add-on' your bow. Everyone else?" (Amelia)

Hearing mine and Amelia's answer, everyone replied in a low voice.

"They told me not to use the one I used in Zwei-san last time" (Misura)

Misura. It is practically his special attack. What a tragedy. The spotlight for the impenetrable wall will be lost, Misura.

“For me, it was that ‘the second-phase’ is out. Makes me want to cry” (Daena)

Daena, I can only call it pitiful. In essence, from the seven of us, at 1vs1, I think he and I are the strongest. And his ability that serves as a cornerstone has been…

“I had my ‘maneuver aria’ sealed. Even though I finally managed to rise it to a combat-ready level and was planning on debuting it here” (Izumo)

Izumo. Doing arias while mobilizing was hammered by Sensei and Shiki-san and was somehow shaped into proper form. What a severe restriction. He named the new aria forming method he learned, ‘maneuver aria’ and was valuing it dearly.
Well, it might be considered a blessing that he wasn’t told to seal the aria language that Shiki-san taught him as well, but it looks like Misura also had the maneuvering aria sealed. Must be harsh for their spirit.

“They told me I am limited to using only one weapon. It unexpectedly has loopholes to that. Not like I will be using those said loopholes though” (Yuno)

Yuno. They are telling her to seal a part of that handiness of her. It is certainly true that there’s a loophole that can be easily found, but who knows if it’s okay to do it.
Raidou-sensei normally puts out the conditions straightforwardly, so he won’t blame us for every thing that has not been said or prohibited. But if we are talking about his evaluation, that would be complicated. Because I think we should honestly follow the conditions laid out to accomplish the objective after all.

“My ‘compound magic’ was banned. The combination of the earth spirit and fire magic has been… Even though I finally had the chance to show the usefulness of the earth element” (Sif)

T-The highest firepower has been sealed. Sif, how pitiful. Even with that, Sif still has enough firepower, and that’s one of the amazing parts of her.
And so, the new battle s that everyone worked on in the summer

vacation (with the guidance of the Senseis though) have been sealed.

“Could it be, Sensei is actually being pressured by the Hopelace household?” (Izumo)

Izumo says the same thing I thought for a moment. Maybe a number of others also thought the same thing as Izumo and I, some of them had their expressions clouded.

“That’s not possible”

“Shiki-san”

With words filled of confidence, Shiki replies. Mine is just a thought and a denial without conviction. The denial of Shiki-san held clear conviction.

“Raidou-sama told you that you guys have been pretty overconfident lately. After all, you have enough leeway that you can do pointless talking with our employees” (Shiki)

Uh. I have no rebuttal for that. As long as they have seen us doing it, there’s no other choice but to earnestly apologize.

“Just think of it as a small test and cheer up” (Shiki)

Test? What a peculiar way of phrasing it.

“Uhm, Shiki-san. What do you mean by test? It intrigues me a bit” (Jin)

“… Oh, what have I done? I made a small verbal slip there” (Shiki)

Verbal slip huh. Probably not the case. They thought of teaching us something from the very beginning.
If it weren’t for Shiki-san, we probably wouldn’t have even noticed anything.
Sorry. Please continue spoiling us with that kindness.

“Does it have anything to do with what sensei said about restrictions and tournament?” (Jin)

There's no guarantee that he will answer, but I can't help it when it is in my mind.
I can already feel how my enthusiasm for this tournament is increasing more than before.

"Can't be helped huh. Keep this a secret from Raidou-sama okay? If you guys are able to show a good fight with the conditions stated, Raidou-sama is thinking about increasing the number of students after the festival ends. Do you understand what that means?" (Shiki)

New students?
If I remember correctly, I heard that the class of Raidou-sensei, even if you try to petition for admittance, you are unable to. In other words, the acceptance of new people will resume. What that means is… Could it be, the end of our lectures?! That's not good!

"Uhh… that you will give up on us?"

Daena-kun, read the damn mood before talking. What will we do if he nods?

"No way. In that case, there would be no need for a test right?" (Shiki)

"Then, something like, 'there's nothing more to teach you now'?"

"That's even more impossible. Fumu, it seems you don't understand. Raidou-sama is thinking that it might be a good time to enter the next phase of your lectures" (Shiki)

While showing amazement at our bad ability to understand things, Shiki-san told us.

"?!"

"For the sake of that, what you have to do isn't to fight with your all and show all the cards you have in hand, but to impose limitations on yourself and be in a stance where you think about how to polish your power and skills even more, is what he told me. For example, something like hiding your trump card" (Shiki)

"…"

"If the seven of you properly finish this task, we will receive new students, and as a part of your education, we will have you review all the contents you have learned. On top of that, I want to go to the next phase of the lecture, is what Raidou-sama discussed for the future" (Shiki)

To be evaluated and accepted by the people who we can't even see their shadows no matter how much we try…
There's nothing as pleasant as that.
I slowly digested the words of Shiki-san.
Power begins to overflow in my body. The jaw of my shut mouth silently increases in strength. I can tell that the trembling originates from my chest and spreads to my whole body. I can't stop my face from unconsciously bending into a smile.

"… Of course, I am also expecting much of you guys. About the acceptance of the attendance petitions, I will be arranging them in the staff office. Well then, from now on, you will have preparations to do, so I will go outside. Right, let's see, for the ones that have time after this, please let me invite you to lunch" (Shiki)

Saying so, Shiki-san leaves while maintaining his gentle smile.
I already don't care if there's restrictions. That lecture has a next phase. We have obtained enough qualification to be tested.
Do a good fight. Do what I am able to… everything I can.

"I-I shouldn't have asked. Now my tension is at its max and it's already turning into very bad levels. I feel like vomiting" (Misura)

Opposed to the people getting hyped, there's Misura, who voiced out words lacking tension. No well, he is tense, but the content is just…

"Misura, I understand how you feel. Honestly speaking, I think there will be harassment and we will most likely be pressured as well, so I really understand your feeling of having your stomach hurt. After hearing that talk, the option of halfheartedly washing it away or giving up has cleanly disappeared. How rough" (Amelia)

On the contrary of Amelia's negative words, there's a battle-ready smile showing in her face.

"We can't show an unsightly fight. After going with Shiki-san for lunch, how about we all gather?" (Daena)

Just like Daena said. I am in the mood of doing whatever I can. In the school festival, the students that are merry are many, and we probably enter the category of quite serious. Just by desperately trying to reach them, our abilities increase. There aren't many things that can compare to this narcotic-like fun. I think that it can't be helped that we are serious about it.

"Onee-chan, not only Sensei will be watching, but Tomoe-san and Mio-san as well. Oto-sama and the others are coming too. Isn't this amazing?! I'm already so overwhelmed～～" (Yuno)

"Even so, the only choice we have is to do what we can. In a different sense, we are already in the path where we just have to give up" (Sif)

Looks like the Rembrandt sisters are getting crazy tense because of the onlookers. Before Raidou-sensei came, they were able to relax to some extent though.
It seems the big noble of Limia doesn't have much influence in Tsige, so the two who don't have plans on going to Limia after graduating, don't feel much pressure.
Thinking that way, these members, who are all scholarship students and don't have any connections with the Limia nobility, might be quite advantageous.
Ah, right.

"Hey, Sif, Yuno. There's something I want to ask" (Amelia)

"What, Amelia-senpai" (Yuno)

"What is it?" (Sif)

"The Tomoe-san and Mio-san that Sensei presented us, are they really stronger than Shiki-san? Honestly, this may be off the point since I don't even know how strong Shiki-san is but, I don't think

there are many who have that degree of power you know?” (Amelia)

Exactly what I wanted to know.
The two of them silently nod at the question Amelia and most likely everyone had in their minds.

“If Raidou-sensei said so, then there’s no mistake. Shiki-san is not registered in the Adventurer Guild, so I don’t know his level, but those two…” (Sif)

Sif’s eyes were gazing faraway and were wavering.

“We were only told by Oto-sama to not be rude to those two, but those two are famous people in Tsige that everyone knows and…” (Yuno)

Yuno talks with an expression that one can feel passion similar to that of admiration. What is it? Is it at the level of Ace from the remote town?
For the close aides of Raidou-sensei, I feel like that degree is a bit too weak though.
While saying this should be kept as a total secret, the sisters look at each other’s face and do a big nod as if being resolute.

““Level is over 1,500””

“…”

The words of the sisters cleanly overlap. Silence took over.
The words that were said in a low voice so that only the ones here could hear were in the common language we are used to hearing, and yet, it didn’t register in our brains properly.
What did she say?

Chapter 122: The Interlude's footsteps

I want to take a small moment to thank all donators again. Arigato!

I feel like doing another fast release week or weeks. I will be announcing the moment I plan on doing it, as it is extremely time consuming, so preparations for that moment are needed.

"You are making a scary face there, Princess Lily. It looks like the face of someone having business with me. Did I hit the mark?"

"Falz-dono, why iss the head of the Adventurer Guild involving himself with a merchant like that? Can you please tell me?" (Lily)

After separating with Raidou, the person Root met was Gritonia's princess.
Not as the head of the superior dragons, but as the head of the Adventurer Guild. He made contact with Gritonia' princess, not as the myriad color dragon, Root, but as Falz.
After the two exchanged something resembling a greeting, Lily takes out Root as if urging him, and brings him to a place with no one around, on top of that, by making probing eyes, finally, the real conversation began.

"Heh~, you know that he is a merchant? Raidou-kun, the head of a company that opened a store in this town. It has been one of my favorites recently" (Root)

"I won't ask you to correct that rude way of speaking this late, but that doesn't mean I will also permit lies. Falz-dono, what is your real relationship with that man?" (Lily)

To the broke down words of Root that one wouldn't be able to imagine were directed to a princess, Lily shows her displeasure in

her face while inquiring his true motives. Her way of speaking is also one that can be scolded upon when using it on someone that has the power to affect the whole world. Maybe it's because they can act this way and no one else would know cause of their current location, or it might be because the relationship between Root and Lily was originally like this, who knows.

"It is true that it's my favorite though" (Root)

"Is Kuzunoha Company using the guild as backing?" (Lily)

"No way. The Adventurer Guild doesn't belong to any country, power or noble. It's an organization that provides support to everyone that is accepted as an adventurer" (Root)

Root speaks out one of the basics of the Adventurer Guild. Of course, there were no lies in those words.

"The woman in that company whose name is Tomoe, the hero of our country is interested in her. She also possesses strength I can't ignore, and personally, when it comes to his wishes, I have a hard time refusing. In this occasion, I don't mind if you just tell me information you are able to disclose. That place… is there a need to crush it?" (Lily)

"To think that your mark was Tomoe. The Empire's hero is also an interesting lad huh. The answer for your question is: nope nope. For now, those guys don't have interest in the general situation of the world. And while I'm at it, let me tell you something. Fighting with the Kuzunoha Company will be like waging war with demon races on both sides. Even if it's the major power Gritonia, I don't recommend it" (Root)

"They have connections with the demon race?!" (Lily)

"Just a way of putting it. It is certain that they are able to be at least that much of a threat after all. Regarding your objective, you have already gathered plenty enough cards. I can't admire sidetracking that much you know" (Root)

Root gives little information of Kuzunoha Company to Lily. He

probably felt something in those words of her, that ‘tell me information you are able to disclose’.

“I thank you for your warning. Even so, to ignore what’s in front of my eyes is just not fit for me. I see, so Kuzunoha’s fighting power is, as I thought, not only Tomoe…” (Lily)

While actually knowing that they have connections to the demon race, the contents of what Root said, didn’t answer the query of Lily directly. Lily also doesn’t think that the head of the Adventurer Guild is honestly cooperating with her. She wants to deepen her information even if a little bit.

“More importantly, is it okay to be here in this kind of times? It is coming soon right? For the curtains of the war festival to open” (Root)

“… You know that, and yet, you haven’t used that information as a base to move or haven’t left traces of it. Falz-dono, you might actually be pretty similar to me” (Lily)

“Ahaha, me and the princess? I am not a slave of revenge like you. Just that, I also have something I am aiming for. And in the path to reach there, at some point, the paths you and I walk will cross, that’s all” (Root)

“… Objective. I don’t think that’s just a simple ambition. In my opinion, I don’t want to turn into an enemy the person that gave me the information of Sofia’s rebellion and the demon race’s ring beforehand. And, it may be irritating to say so, but I don’t even know how much information of the Empire you have in your hands. If possible, can you please tell me that objective? There might be something I can help out with” (Lily)

Lily’s words were her true feelings. This Guild Master with a bold attitude, even when he spoke out the basis of the Adventurer Guild, he has been cooperating with the Empire’s princess. At times, giving important information or warnings. There have been several times where she has been saved by that. Just that, he is not a subordinate nor a close friend. In this current state where she doesn’t know his objective, it just gives Lily an inexplicable amount of anxiety.

But he answered by shaking his head.

“When there’s the need to, I will. It is fine for you to just continue aiming for that ideal world with the hero. As long as you are accepted as an adventurer, I intent to continue the relationship we have had till now” (Root)

“As long as I am accepted as an adventurer huh”

“That’s right. No matter who and from where, as long as that person is accepted as an adventurer and receives the guild, I will be that person’s collaborator. Well then, we probably will meet again soon but, see you later” (Root)

Without destroying the barrier that would repel several intruders at once, Root walks normally through it. Lily, who he interacted with as the Guild Master, only looked at his back with surprise.
The words of Root as well as the meaningful smile he left, changed the expression of the princess.

“No matter who and from where, he says. Not just the empire, you aren’t even the ally of the hyumans only huh. No matter if it’s demi-human or demon, as long as they are accepted as adventurers, you are their collaborator. Is that what you are trying to say?” (Lily)

Lily bites her lips.
She thinks that her interpretation of the words just now weren’t wrong. That’s why he holds information of several powers, is what he probably meant, but there’s no way of knowing.
No matter which, it is trouble, is what she thinks.

“… From the very beginning, he grasped almost every objective I had. On top of that, he told me about the ring that suppresses the power of the Goddess and the betrayal of the Dragon Killer” (Lily)

Thanks to that, the empire has been able to steer the war better than other countries, is how Lily thinks. From his position of assisting the adventurers, the act of leaking the movements of Sofia would go against what he said, but the words of him, the Guild Master, were that the actions of Sofia are a big betrayal to the Guild. She is a target of punishment, so she is not under his

protection, is what he explained.
And in reality, the Empire, or more like, a country which has influences with the Empire, investigated and discovered that Sofia has not used the guild a single time since Falz explained to her.
That would at least mean that one of her backings disappeared.
It is true that in the past she was opaque and, of course, wasn't someone trustworthy though.

(It's certain that bringing down Stella is our number one priority right now. If there are no outstanding talents by the time I am here, I will return to the Empire early. Currently, I should look at the contact of Raidou and Falz as a plus. If our interests still match, that means it would be bad to put a hand on the Kuzunoha Company. That's why he gave me information. And also, right now I have no leeway to fight anyone other than the demon race) (Lily)

This time for sure, we will attack and succeed.
In the princess' eyes, there was a clear strong spirit.

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"Yo, have you woken up?"

I pour water on the man that is bound at the seat to wake him up.
I have the all-purpose skill called magic, so there's actually no need to tie him to a chair or urge him to wake up by pouring water, but Shiki and Lime say that this should be the pattern.
I originally didn't have plans on making contact with him in this kind of way, and yet, here I am doing it. Maybe I am getting influenced, and also, probably have pent-up stress too.

"!!"

"I think you have already heard from Rona-san but, I am Raidou. Nice to meet you" (Makoto)

"This is… Kuzunoha Company's basement room huh"

The blue skinned man splendidly guessed right his current location.
He knows that I am Raidou, and moreover, he knew of the existence of this room beforehand. Meaning, it was a perfect guess to the

right answer, but… intelligence. As a group member, that reaction was a major fail. I'm glad. If all the intelligence members of the demon race were like Rona-san, I feel like it would scrape away my nerves after all.

"And you are a demon, right?" (Makoto)

"Why… are you getting in our way? We have received orders from Rona-sama stating that we should not put a hand on you guys, and if there's a need to, cooperate. At least there shouldn't be any reason to receive this kind of treatment"

"No need to be scared. In the times I am here, the things you think don't happen that much" (Makoto)

If I am not here, the danger increases in an instant though, the basement room. Maybe it is because he knows dangerous types of information, the young man with a fit body despite his small build, had his eyes blurred with fear. Even if he is a subordinate of Rona-san, he is a newcomer huh. He doesn't give me that uncomfortable feeling that Rona-san gives out.
So he was told that by Rona-san huh.
True.
Since the time she left the academy, no matter if in public or in the shadows, there was no instance where the demons did something to us. That's why, even when I noticed several presences of demons, I tolerated them since they had no evil intent. That thinking didn't change even when I saw the infiltrated demon escorts of the big-shot of Lorel, Sairitz.

"What do you plan on doing to me?"

"I want you to hear my request. It would have been fine to call Rona-san for that, but I was in a bit of a hurry. I apologize for my rough method. One of our employees got the meaning of 'politely' wrong you see. Sorry" (Makoto)

"Request? A request for cooperation?"

"In the time of the tournament and until it ends, I want all the demons in this town to leave. Just that" (Makoto)

“?!! I can’t decide that on my own discretion. Also, you said all, but in this town there are several demons that have different views from us. It is impossible to bring them as well”

…
Maybe it is the truth or a lie. If it is a lie, this is probably a means to make it look as if some of the others are outsiders with different affiliations, in order to leave several comrades here.
For now, I should have all the ones posted on us depart, and the ones who are remaining, it is fine to just be cautious. For the meantime, it is okay if the demons affiliated with the demon lord just refrain from doing anything on their own convenience.
I look at Lime. Maybe he understood what I was trying to say, he looks back at the demon.

“Waka thinks that it is fine to just have the ones posted around us withdraw. We infer that there’s 13 comrades of yours out there. That’s the amount of comrades we want you to at least withdraw” (Lime)

“?!!”

“You said that this can’t be decided by your own discretion, but please decided it. Right now, we don’t want to have troubles with you guys. I don’t know about the future, but right now that’s the case. If you acknowledge it, we will soon release you” (Makoto)

The intelligence member retains silence for a moment after seeing my attitude.
It took a bit after before he folded to our ‘request’ and promised that he would get in touch with them.

“It is effective when you threaten them with force, Waka-sama”

“If I knew this would happen, it would have gone smoother if I just brought the talk to Rona-san. Well, I didn’t want her questioning me so I chose this kind of method though. Hah~ why did it turn out this way?” (Makoto)

“I unintentionally said something out of my way like ‘who would be able to incapacitate him the fastest and restrain him’ and we ended

pumped up. I am sorry” (Lime)

Stalking boasting, no, capture boasting? A conversation of intelligence members huh. I can’t understand how that conversation made them pumped up. It seems this time Lime won. What was wagered was the payment of a meal, how peaceful.
Since it turned out this way, I should at least contact Rona-san to say a few words.

“Shiki, I count on you for the preparations. Make sure to makes it in time by the tournament. I will go talk to Rona-san for a bit” (Makoto)

“Understood” (Shiki)

I return to my room and finish changing.
Last night I slept early and woke up early by the time it was still dark, so my consciousness is still clear. After taking a light breakfast of pan, I should talk with Rona-san, is what I thought while passing some time troubled.
Ei, not the time to be saying I’m not good at dealing with her huh.
The improvement and analysis of the Kuzunoha Company thought transmission is now useable, but I use the thought transmission that Rona-san gave me in a memo just like it is. Until the connection is established, I have no choice but to wait soundless. By the way, the Kuzunoha Company’s thought transmission has a ‘puruuru’ standby sound. This is probably also a beauty pattern in a sense. Since this has practically nothing to do with security after all.

(Raidou, I am happy to receive a call from you. Is there anything we can help you with? Or could it be, you only wanted to talk with me?) (Rona)

(Both, is what I want to say, but this time I have a request) (Makoto)

‘He wants my cooperation in something, right?’ She probably already received the report from her subordinates. Even so, she still plays as if she doesn’t know huh.

(I will listen. Say it~) (Rona)

(For a brief amount of time, until the tournament finishes is fine, I want the subordinates Rona-san has hidden in Rotsgard to withdraw. Until now, I have been able to tolerate them without problems but…) (Makoto)

(Can I ask the reason why?) (Rona)

She would obviously ask. But, what would be a good answer? If I said something about the Limia noble, there's the chance Rona-san would take some kind of action. Well, thinking that way might be a bit conceited of me though.

(If possible, I want you to please not ask) (Makoto)

(I see. But to do it by today would hard…) (Rona)

(I can't talk about it in detail, but part of it is for Jin and Amelia's sake) (Makoto)

(Ara, it might have been a short time, but they are acquaintances that took the same class as me. If that's the case, I will push myself the most I can. The payment will be meeting the demon lord once, how about it?) (Rona)

(… Got it. Someday, at a time that fits your convenience) (Makoto)

(Ufufu, I will do my best to create some time, okay? Well then, I will have all my subordinates in Rotsgard, uhm, it was somewhere around 10 right? Until the school festival is over, I will have them take a holiday) (Rona)

(13. I'm counting on you) (Makoto)

(To mess up the numbers, I am a failure as a superior. Please keep what happened here a secret from my subordinates okay? Raidou-do-no) (Rona)

(Understood. Well then, with this…) (Makoto)

(Call me again, anytime you want, okay? I will be waiting) (Rona)

… Hah~, just as I thought, this is tiring. After the thought

transmission was cut off, fatigue attacked my body in an instant. Having the conversation proceed strangely smoothly was unpleasant instead. It felt like she was appealing that 'I am good willed you know~' and trying to sound out my intentions. I don't like that.
But with this, I can concentrate in the follow-up of the students. I wondered what would happen if I brought out the name of Jin and Amelia, but it seems it went better than expected. Maybe the demon race didn't plan on doing anything in this period of time?
If it's just meeting the demon lord, it isn't something I can't pay. If I meet him/her and it's a crazy good person, I even think I wouldn't want to make him/her my enemy.
What's left is the Hopelace household huh. Limia is the country where the hero is, so it is hard to do anything rash. Luckily, the king himself came here, so I want to believe that he won't do anything crazy. Please restrain yourself to a level where we can resolve it in a peaceful manner. At any rate, Hopelace huh. I feel like I have heard that before.

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"To stand up in the middle of a strategy meeting. You are beginning to resemble Sofia, Rona"

"Don't joke around. Can you please not put me in the same category as that traitor and battle-junkie? More importantly, the preparations on your side are proceeding right?" (Rona)

There's an important meeting that's being done all morning. This has been a regular scenario in Stella Fort recently.
The demon general Rona left her seat, something she normally doesn't do, and just like that, without returning to the meeting, she placed an elbow on the ramparts of the fortress and looked faraway as if thinking about something.
In the top edge of the fortress walls, the place where the archers and magicians are located to attack, is also normally used as a place for the soldiers to rest. In this time when they are training, it is also a place that no one is in.
Rona has been here for quite a long time, and it is because that man has been basically living with her in that place that he was able to know her location.

The other demon general stationed in Stella Fort, Io.
After the meeting finished, he came to this place and called out at Rona's back.

"Of course. And, it seems you were in thought transmission though?" (Io)

"How sharp sighted. Men that mind the thought transmissions of women are hated you know? It was from the person I reported before, Raidou. I thought he would have a bit of troubles in Rotsgard, but it seems that's not the case. Rotsgard and Raidou, I couldn't ignore those" (Rona)

"My life is devoted to my lord and the nation. I don't care what women think about me. Will it affect the strategy?" (Io)

Hearing the name Rotsgard and Raidou, Io's expression clouds. He is the person that Rona said in her report to be careful of, and in the upper stratum of the demon race, he is pretty known already. It was hinted that there's the chance he could become a powerful cooperator, so a prompt decision was made that they shouldn't show antagonism towards them.

"None. At most, I was a bit angered by the fact that he knew the exact number of people concealed. Also, the incompetency of my subordinates. I have already finished what I had to do, so there's no problems in having them withdraw" (Rona)

Turning around her body, Rona leans her back in the place where her elbow was placed, and looks at Io face to face.

"He requested the withdrawal of the personnel in Rotsgard huh. Could it be he really noticed something? Also, it seems you accepted those conditions, but if things continue, it would go against his request, right?" (Io)

"That boy doesn't have means to gather information from the demon race camp. Also, he only asked me to withdraw my subordinates. Even if I am here and do something, it wouldn't go against my promise with him, right?" (Rona)

Narrowing her eyes, Rona lifts the corners of her mouth and laughs. The expression of the woman that thinks up schemes, a portion of people would find her charming, but in the eyes of a military man like Io, it wasn't a likeable face.

"… What an unpleasant woman you are. I pity that young man called Raidou" (Io)

"I will take that as a compliment. I think you already understand this but, this will decide it" (Rona)

"No need to tell me. It's only been half a year. I am not going to underestimate them. No matter how much Hibiki, the Limia hero, has grown, I will just crush it" (Io)

The four armed giant has an expression as if anticipating the growth of his enemy that he hasn't met for half a year.

"And the ring?" (Io)

"Of course, it has been changed from the early stage prototypes to the middle stage prototypes. It's about that Goddess. With this, we will be able to seal their powers again. And so, after a few steps more…" (Rona)

"The hyumans will steer clear from the wastelands for certain. By the plans of Demon Lord-sama. After obtaining the divine protection of the spirits and a rich land, we will finally be able to receive the spring of this world with enjoyment" (Io)

The ring that seals the powers of the Goddess was already perfected by the hands of the demon race. Just that, after using it once, there's no guarantee the Goddess camp will not counter it. Because of those fears, they first manufactured a small version to seal the power of the Goddess and check if it worked. When the Demon Lord confirmed the results, he told this to the demon generals and acknowledged the development of a middle stage prototype that will negate the countermeasures for the early stage one. It is a tactic that was born by the information of the Goddess countermeasures for the early stage rings, provided by the high spirits of fire and earth.

On top of that, to make sure that they make a countermeasure for the early stage prototype, they leaked out information of the ring to a part of the hyumans beforehand and manipulated it in a way that it would reach the ears of the Goddess as well.
The trap of the meticulous demon race was about to bare its fangs.

Chapter 123: Noble's way of fighting

The guest seats are lined up as if enclosing the round stage.
To think that this is the way I would see a coliseum which I have always thought about visiting once. You can't predict what life will bring you.
It isn't the famous Roman type though.
At the outskirts of the academy, there's a giant arena for the tournament. It surprises me to see this enormous construction, which could pass to history in the future, as a facility of the school.
When looking at the conduct of the students and the teachers of Rotsgard Academy, there are times when one would think that this is a second-rate institution you could find anywhere. Even so, when looking at the facilities and its scale, it reminds you that this is the highest academic center of the hyumans.

"What was Rembrandt-san hesitating in saying?" (Shiki)

"His daughters' safety… is most likely not. It looked like he was heading to the merchant guild today regarding that case. Might be a considerable problem" (Makoto)

"The Hopelace pressure?" (Shiki)

"It could be" (Makoto)

I was completely underestimating the stratum called noble.
It may have been for only one night, but just in case I had Shiki posted. In the meal of the store that they first went to, there was poison that would make them lose their sense of balance; in the water that the waiter provided at the dormitory, there was poison that induced diarrhea and stomachache; at night, there were several assassins. It was truly a full-course of actions to obstruct their participation in the tournament. Listening to the report, while it was in the range of my expectations, it still amazed me quite a lot.

At the appointed day, or so to say, today, I thought it already finished and was feeling relief.
And then, this time I received a sudden call from Rembrandt-san. It seems the Merchant Guild said something happened regarding me. He said he would head there and see what he can do. Since his wife also accompanied him, today Rembrandt-san isn't here to watch. I do feel that this also has to do with the obstruction of the big noble.
'Do nobles go that far?' Is what I thought.
This is a school, and no matter what his family is, he is still one student. In other words, the methods of poison and assassins that I made a guess of, were the worst methods. Because you know, even if it is a tournament, it is just one event in the school festival.

"I am surprised he could go this far…" (Makoto)

I look at the chart of pairings in my hands.
There, I have a paper that has written 'tournament chart' in it. A pamphlet of the tournament.
The warrior category and the magician category are divided the same. After several steps, it is made so that the categories clash at one point.
From my class, there's: Jin, Misura, Daena and Yuno in the warrior category; Amelia, Sif and Izumo in the magician category.
And the ones participating are the ones that passed the preliminaries, in total, there are 40. By the way, after the individual battles, there will be team battles, so there aren't many people participating in the individual battles.
This most likely means that there are more students better suited for team battles. Probably because instead of having a crushing defeat in individual fights and leave good results in the team battles, it is better to just participate in the team battle and leave only good results, is what I suspect. Because it is plenty possible to leave good results by the abilities of the people around you after all. The people that didn't watch it directly will only see the final results that will be remaining.
The students that are only participating in the team battles can put a front saying that they are scared of injuries that might happen in the individual battles, to pull back from participating. How well done. Tte, I unintentionally ended up thinking about it in the bad direction.

By the way, Jin and the others will be participating in both. And the second son of the Hopelace household will be as well.

“The first matches will be Jin vs Misura, Daena vs Yuno. The winners will be clashing later. In the magician category: first match is Amelia vs Sif, and the winner will clash with the seeded, Izumo. So he can even manipulate the tournament chart…” (Makoto)

“Meaning, it will be a battle between Waka’s students. I am looking forward to it” (Tomoe)

“Tomoe… What an incredibly positive way of thinking. I am simply surprised. Isn’t it an ‘everything goes’? He can even put his hands on the rules” (Makoto)

Maybe Tomoe doesn’t understand what this implicates, she speaks something out of point. What I am trying to say is that the rules are futile to nobles. Even when he is still a student, he is still able to push this much authority.
This is too incredible.

“It seems the Hopelace household has more authority than I thought, and the academy is not a place of fairness huh. That bunch over there too…” (Makoto)

I look at the people sitting on the guest seats that are far away from the general seats of us.
There are several faces I have seen before lined up. Proof that my surroundings have become even messier than before.
There are several people close to the Academy principal, whose only thing I know of is his face. They are probably people from the four major powers. In other words, Limia or Gritonia. Sitting in a place a little away, is the Adventurer Guild’s head, Root. In the line of people related to the church, there’s the priest I met before, and there’s also the big-shot of Lorel, Sairitz. They most likely don’t know that this matches were fixed by a mere student. But my students have suffered damage from it, so in my eyes, they are reflected as having the same offense.
In those people, there is one that I had no choice but to have connections with because of my thoughtlessness, and there’s also another that locked me because I am an otherworldler.

… Now that I think about it, since the time I came here, I have been lying a lot. That has been piling up bit by bit, and I feel like it's beginning to turn troublesome. To protect the lie, make a lie. There's no end.

"Waka?" (Tomoe)

"That is… now, after all this time of moving around huh. This is probably the limit. Hey, Tomoe" (Makoto)

"Y-Yes?" (Tomoe)

Why are you stuttering Tomoe? Is it bad for me to do a serious face?

"Do you want the four seasons in Asora?" (Makoto)

"! Of course!" (Tomoe)

"… I see" (Makoto)

"Waka-sama, I found something interesting so I bought it-desu wa～～, just in case, I bought enough for three" (Mio)

"Thanks, Mio" (Makoto)

"You are now capable of being mindful huh, Mio" (Tomoe)

When I take the paper bag from Mio, a scent resembling basil tickles my nose. Today's priority is scent? The heat transmits to my hands and tells me that this is a warm food. I'm looking forward to it. I hear a low 'That's unfair-desu' from Mio while she bites her lips. I decide to act as if I didn't see it and look at the stage. Now that they have come this far, Jin and the others just have to do what they can. There's a lot of things to think about, however, I have no choice but to watch over it.

A voice announcing the beginning of the tournament resonates.

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"Now then, the next match is between two of the highest levels

participating in this tournament! Both of them are level 97! First, Jin Roan! While being a high grade department's second year, in terms of practical skill, he is a prodigy that has already entered the highest ranking of all! Especially in his sword techniques, there are many that are paying attention to it! On the other hand, we have Misura Kasper! The vanguard that is the highest rated by magicians! His defensive power that can be called impregnable fortress, and the skillfulness in his ability to utilize even healing magic. He is a swordsman that possesses both of this!"

The high-tensioned voice clearly resounded.
But the expression of the two that walked up the stage were as if they chewed a bitter bug. What a bad face they are making. Even I can tell the reason why. The weapon in their hands, and also this pairing. I don't know the specific quality of the wood, but Jin and Misura have a wooden sword in their hands.
A wooden sword that has a general size for one hand.
The other students had metal-types. I could tell that each of them brought the weapons they liked the most. Some of them even got victories because of the specs of their weapons.
I didn't give any instructions about fighting with wooden swords, and of course, this is most likely not their will. When you receive a different weapon from the one you originally had, it is understandable why they would have that kind of face.

"First of all, a word to everyone. This season's tournament has several participants that have achieved levels over 90, so for the sake of making a balanced evaluation with the other students, a number of restrictions have been established"

Then just make a grade system for levels from the very beginning like the ones in judo and boxing to divide the ranks before doing the tournament.
If they talk about level difference and all that gibberish, they should have considered adding restrictions to the weapons and tools utilized.
Ah~, my head is rotting.

"The equipment they possess is only that one. It is in consideration of the other participants. Well then, before beginning, we will confirm the rules! The time limit of the battle is 10 minutes. The

damage will be transferred to dolls and will substitute for the injuries the person itself takes. The destruction of this doll denotes incapacitation in battle, and at that moment, the battle will end. Also, in the battles of the warrior category, the use of attack and healing magic are prohibited, and the only ones that can be used are self-support related magic. In the case that someone steps out of boundaries, it will decrease points, and if the battle is not decided in the time limit, it will affect the verdict greatly"

'Doll', if it is prepared beforehand, this convenient item will shoulder the damage you should be receiving. It looks like a matryoshka of around 1 meter height. In this kind of tournaments it is sometimes used and it is extremely high priced.
I thought this was a tool that might increase in effectiveness when used in real combat, but for the doll to be useful, there's the need of adjusting the place, and in terms of the effective time, it has a lot of restrictions, so it is in essence impossible to use in real combat.

In this case, they prepare the high priced doll and make a connection with it and the arena that will be serving as the stage, and while at it, they do the procedures between the students and the doll. And by doing that, it seems it is possible to shoulder the damage for around 15-30 minutes.
In the case that there's surplus of damage, an overkill, the remaining damage will return to the person itself, so just in case, there's 3 dolls prepared for each person in each match. The vivid depiction of a bourgeois academy. In other words, if only one of those are destroyed, it means you lose.
At any rate, this rules are like bullying Misura. Don't use healing magic; finish the fight fast. Both of those are heavy constraints for Misura. In comparison, Jin practically doesn't have anything binding him. Also, Jin is not the type to be merciful, so it will be a fight with him on the offensive till the fight ends. The verdict will also turn to, obviously, Jin.

"Well then, Jin Roan versus Misura Kasuba, battle start!!"

The spectator seats were slightly quiet, but when they received that signal, it changed into a high volume roar.
With the improved eyesight I wouldn't be able to fathom in my previous life , I can tell that the two of them are doing some kind of

talk.
Jin immediately closed the distance and swings downwards at Misura. The unreliable wooden sword that is several times thinner than what he normally uses, was stopped by Misura. As expected of Misura who has the highest defensive ability, he didn't break his stance even with the sudden attack. A combo of attacks that are fit to be called a rush were coming one after the other with low amounts of intervals towards Misura. Just as expected, against Jin's swift attacks, Misura can't throw an effective attack and is being forced to just defending.
The conversation probably went: 'This is also a part of luck, don't think badly of me', and 'Even so, I won't slack'.

"Well, what to say, this is quite the simple and one-sided match huh" (Tomoe)

Tomoe looks at the development of the fight with bored eyes. There's no doubt that this isn't a show one can consider interesting. But, in terms of technique, the people that specialize in swordsmanship and close combat should have something to look at. The way of chaining attacks, way of blocking; those kind of things should make minute differences.

"… In terms of body, I will take back what I said, but as I thought, if I was told this is something a lot of people gather to watch, I still wouldn't be able to understand-desu wa" (Mio)

Sadly, it looks like it showed as a boring exhibition for Mio. Misura's fighting is centered in defense. A plain to the taste of professionals. That she took back what she said, must be because she got a bit of a better opinion regarding their technique. Compared to the time they began taking my lectures, it was clear that the two fighting right now have a more polished thought process, and in my eyes, it is actually a pretty worthy watch. Shifting their bodies, opening the distance; Jin and Misura are truly fighting while thinking thoroughly. They are probably better than me at instant decision making already. They have incredibly good wit after all.
In the eyes of the spectators as well, they can tell that the speed of this fight is several times faster than previous ones, furthermore, the movement of their body is smooth and varied, so at the beginning,

there were quite a lot of cheers. But the attack turn of Jin isn't ending, so it slowly turned into booing directed at Misura. This is pitiful.
Misura is a boy that has the ability to even handle Jin using dual swords. Moreover, even in lectures or in his free time, he is doing mock battles. In terms of swordsmanship sense, he is without doubt higher than Jin. The experience is clearly defining his abilities and he is able to defend.
For example, when there's a combo of more than three attacks, Misura chooses one of the attacks accurately to repel it. In that framework, in that flow, his eyes that are able to see through the core of the attacks can be considered one of his strongest weapons. He also learned how to parry strong attacks in the fights with Zwei-san. A discreet stock in his growth.
Misura is properly killing the momentum of Jin with the way he moves his body and the way he takes his distance. Even with that much flow and momentum killed, the attacks still continue probably because it is Jin. That guy＜Jin＞ also has the wit and instincts of a beast, and he mixes both to push his sharp sense of the sword. Well, if I had to evaluate with only this match, I would praise Misura.

Both of them can't do a winning move, so they have no choice but to clash a lot.
The booing towards Misura gets higher. The match is already not about victory or defeat, and has changed into something similar to military exercises where both fighters confirm each other's movement, power and techniques. There are several people that have already noticed this.
The moment Tomoe noticed that change, she narrowed her eyes and let out a 'Hoh～' as if in admiration. Looks like she sensed it.
Even though it is an incredible fight, there's something out of place. The impressions of the many people around are just as it looks. Those harmonious movements that give a strange out of place sensation are probably noticed only by people that have seen military exercises before and people like Tomoe, who have a decent amount of technique. By the way, I am of the former type. I have seen several serious military exercises with swords. Jin and Misura are giving the same kind of atmosphere.
I feel like Mio is also able to tell. She is watching the match with a

bored look. The fast food in her hand and the match; her interest is probably divided 80% on the food and 20% on the match. Even so, the reason why I feel like she might respond with the right answer if I asked, is because Mio's intuition has a scary rate of striking home.

"Hm, the match is over huh. Like this, the winner will be Misura" (Makoto)

"Right. In the end, there were practically no effective attacks. Jin, who has been in the offensive, will win by verdict, but in terms of the fight, Misura is the winner" (Tomoe)

"Winning the match but losing the fight huh. And yet, the venue is treating Misura as a coward. Ahaha, that Jin, he is making a pretty easy to understand face. Misura is also showing his sense of achievement through his face" (Makoto)

"Well, compared to the idiotic matches until now, I have enjoyed myself a lot more. As expected of Waka's students. After all, the ones until now have been mostly: prepare their stance, attack, block or evade, fix their stance, counter-attack. Their actions and the execution of their next movement was so obvious that the stupidness was shooting out full-throttle. Honestly speaking, with that level of skill, just by having a good weapon, the match is decided. In a sense, I was watching with opposition" (Tomoe)

"Exactly. Jin and the others said that recently it has become hard to hide their strength in the other classes. I understand the reason why now. If they were to make those kind of movements in those classes, they would definitely… stand out. It seems they were taking me into consideration. It makes me happy to have good students" (Makoto)

"That's a good thing. Fumufumu, for the time being, I will think of a reward for Misura. A bout, a bout, a bout… Well then, who should it be～?" (Tomoe)

… You are rewarding him with a slap.
Just as expected, Jin won by verdict. Contrary to the results, Misura walks out from the arena with a satisfied expression. It was a match

that had impact. Even if he will be involved with Tomoe, no doubt it will turn into good experience for him, so when the school festival is over, let's make some time for that.
The next match that my students will appear in is the magician category, first match and in the next match of the warrior category. It doesn't feel like it will be taking that much time, so maybe I should just stay watching like this.

Chapter 124: Amelia vs Sif

Honestly, the magician category matches were worse than the warrior category.
Chant aria, release.
Chant aria, release.
That's all.
Every single one of them didn't do any decent moving. They activate the barrier tool that they brought in advance, chant arias, and release it; everything else the same. If your spell's power is strong and it manages to pass through your opponent, it is practically your win. The one who received the spell will not be able to properly concentrate, and since the aria won't be able to finish properly, that person will just sluggishly escape.
I felt like I was watching a speed-talking contest. Seeing this, I can tell that Sif was pretty competent the first time she participated in my lecture.
This is an academy that gathers the excelling warriors and magicians, right? Please try to be more decent, like, seriously.

Like, both Tomoe and Mio laughed out loud.
At the first match, they went silent; at the next one, they couldn't hold it in and bursted out, then, they held their stomach and laughed. As the matches continued, they even made eyes as if questioning the sanity of the participants.

"Uhm, Waka. This is a fight where magicians compete with each other, right?" (Tomoe)

"… Most of the kids look like they are somewhat serious-desu wa. They are doing it seriously, right?" (Mio)

"It looks serious. It doesn't even amount to a show, but the surrounding guests are really happy and cheering" (Makoto)

My head hurts. In other words, it's not that this year is especially bad, but that this is the average level each year. I don't want to

believe that there's a person wanting to employ anyone of them after looking at this. If it were me, I would have failed every one of them after 5 minutes of beginning.

"Could it be… Waka's students will also be like that?" (Tomoe)

"I can't bear to look at it. It is so bad that I even forgot the taste of what I am eating for a second" (Mio)

Even if they are people in charge of providing firepower from the back, this is just…
The sound itself is flashy, but it feels like I am watching a command- battle. The warrior category is at least better than this. This is just spectating batteries.
In terms of what's fixed and manual procedure, I thought this kind of things would be criticized. Well, there's the plus that it provides stability in quality though.

"Oh~, they moved!" (Tomoe)

"Finally, it seems we will be able to watch a decent magician fight-desu wa" (Mio)

The fight of the two began.
Amelia and Sif. Sadly, the winner is already settled. With this stage and rules, and also thinking about the capacity as a magician from the two; even if a miracle occurs, Amelia has no chance of winning. In the first place, that girl hasn't brought her main weapon which is the bow. Because aside from the staff that magicians use as intermediary, they can't bring any other weapon.
Also, Sif's power is purely in a whole different level. If Rembrandt-san were to come and see it, he would be relieved and be able to continue spectating without worries.
The grounds turned silent in an instant. Well, no surprise there. They thought those two would activate their barriers, but Sif suddenly pointed her staff at Amelia, and Amelia faced Sif and charged.
Sif's staff is not the one she brought from home, but a thin wooden staff that screams 'I am a practice staff'. At least it does have a jewel at the tip that serves to control magic power (not that good though).

I think that Amelia's charge is a good decision. If you think about it even for a little, it is obvious that you can't beat Sif in a normal fight. The specialty of Sif is firepower. She can also do support in the battlefield by using the earth spirit, but normally she uses the fire element, which she is more compatible with. The fire element has a lot of attack methods for single targets and area of effects to begin with, but in the present where she can combine it with the earth spirit magic, that firepower is something to watch out for.
I can say for sure that the one who increased its single-attack firepower the most in my lecture is Sif. Things like magma, I honestly feel like that's cheating. The first time I saw a lava bullet, I even thought it was a meteor.
Amelia grasped that the aria of Sif was of fire element, so she charged, and that's why it's praiseworthy. If she closes the distance, restrictions to the firepower of Sif will appear. If the firepower is too high, there's the chance that she will get dragged into it as well, so those kind of spells would be out, and, this may not happen normally in magician fights, but thinking about Amelia's disposition, she is at an advantage in close combat. If this were earth element, the choice of waiting and seeing is not bad either.
Sif shoots out a standard-type arrow that's clad in red light. Well, instead of an arrow, it is more of a bullet. The speed in which the aria was finished was so short that it couldn't be compared to the matches until now. A big commotion occurs in the audience. Me thinking that this is still slow would most likely be strange for them.
Seeing her opponent finishing her spell, the running Amelia makes a brake and whispers a: 'What's going on?' She makes a step to the left, and once again, the staff of Amelia who's approaching Sif, shines a pale light. She finished her aria by the time she moved to the left huh. That Amelia, was she this fast in arias? It may have been in the spur of the moment… Could it be, Amelia can also use the maneuver aria of Izumo? He gave it a cool name and was treasuring it, but in other words, it is a combination of aria reduction and part-by-part aria.
I thought the fire arrow that was going straight would surely be avoided, but in the moment Amelia stopped her steps, Sif matched that and changed the direction of her spell. The steered attack magic that Sif showed only once. So she mastered it huh. Impressive. That single move threw Amelia into a disadvantage.

Cheers erupt once again.
Even though it's only been one minute since the match began, the developments are coming fast.
A spell with a decent amount of power hits Amelia!
No, she evaded it!
Pushing out her pale shining staff to the front, she changed the trajectory of the arrow. I remember that I have shown that move a number of times when fighting with Shiki. The one I did was cladding magic power to my fists and crushing the light-shaped spear with brute strength though. What Amelia did was not that kind of rough method. She pushed out her staff to a point that just barely touched the arrow and made a small explosion with the faint light to change the arrow's trajectory. What a skilled girl. It may be because she is someone that endows various type of magic to her arrows which made her able to think up this kind of method, but it is truly fearsome.
No matter how much steering potential it has, when you have to make your own magic pursue the target that's approaching you, the danger to the magician itself increases in an instant. There's still some distance between them, but this is an unfavorable development for Sif.
There's some sort of conversation between the accelerating Amelia and Sif. Maybe they are complimenting each other's strenuous efforts? Those two get along unexpectedly well after all.
Amelia's expression distorts. And then, for some reason, she stops her feet and looks at her back. What happened?
It was in an instant.
The arrow that Amelia deflected exploded close to her back. So Sif thought of the ending properly huh. And she announced it in that conversation just now. Or maybe it was a sign to make it blow.
There's quite the distance between us, so, as expected, I am unable to tell what the content of their conversation was. I can't lip read after all.
The blast from her back and the arrow's fragments attack Amelia.
She probably judged it impossible to evade, she deploys a barrier.
Yeah, she is properly training. It was smooth. Amelia may not be that good at complex spells, but in exchange, she is really proficient at basic spells. I remember her asking me 'What's the point of praising me for that? What's impressive about it?' Strong points might be something that, unexpectedly, the person itself doesn't

notice.
Even so, Amelia was blown away, and to create distance, Sif runs away, no, she closed the distance?!
Amelia's doll shoulders the damage and a part of it breaks. It didn't break apart completely, but the left shoulder has been destroyed in totality. It determines that it was quite the damage.
With a thrust, Sif hits the stage once. The stone paving that's spread out in the stage changed its shape and it's reformed into a giant hand. Amelia, who still hasn't corrected her stance yet, was seized and all futile resistance was stopped.
Being grabbed by the stone hand and lifted up to about two meters in height, Sif points her staff at Amelia and stops. The fighting eyes of the grabbed Amelia were being directed at Sif, but after some time, she closes those eyes and turns her head upwards. It is settled.

"Well, well, this was a good fight. A short decisive fight where both fighters knew each other's ability. Inside those confined rules, Sif was in the advantage, but in terms of real combat, who knows what would happen. What an interesting pair" (Tomoe)

Tomoe makes a satisfied face. Well, it may have been the backlash of all the fights till now, but as a fight between magicians, this was good. It was a short way to the conclusion that took less than 3 minutes, but the two of them did well. It seems Tomoe was able to feel the competency of Amelia in real combat at this state where she is prohibited to use some skills. And in truth, not only can she do attack magic, she can also endow support and barrier spells to her arrows and increase the variety of tactics in a party.

"She is still taking time in her arias, but at least compared to the guys till now, she is a lot better-desu wa ne" (Mio)

Mio is bitter. *In her case, the sensation of aria separation that was used in the offensive and defensive just now, was in basis different*. Well, that's the same for me who's used to it. <こいつの場合、今の攻防で使われたようなのは詠唱無しでぶっ放すから感覚が根本的に違うよな>
A defeat declaration leaked out from Amelia's mouth. Along with the signal ending the fight, big cheers rained to the girls. With the match just now, there seem to be none who were booing Amelia. From the outside, it looked like even though she is a magician, she

charged and showed that she was able to deflect the magic, but in the end, she was blasted and lost. Moreover, in 2-3 minutes. Will she feel down when looking back at it later? Well, I feel like Shiki will be able to comfort her to some extent, so it should be fine to leave it be. I wouldn't want to be hated for intruding on her after all.
The rock hand liberates her and puts her down on the stage. The hand that has accomplished his job returns to being a part of the stage. Spirit magic has short arias to begin with, so if you are able to use it, you will have an easy advantage. And in truth, almost all the people that are able to use spirit magic have won and advanced. By the way, our Amelia can easily win against the other spirit users. Regarding Sif… in the magician category, she will probably win easily.
While watching over those two walking down the stage, I couldn't help but pity Izumo who's going to be fighting Sif next.

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The guest seats were beginning to fall silent.
Just like in the first round's last match of the warrior category. Amelia Hopelace and Sif Rembrandt's match. This is the reason. Kuku… kukuku. Those prior warrior kids as well; counting those 4, all 6 of them are Makoto-kun's students. Just how much does he intent to entertain me?
As the master of the Adventurer Guild, I am watching the tournament in the guest seats. For the most important event that just takes three days, scouts come here from many countries. This is also a chance for the students to appeal for a place of employment. … Well, even if I watch, it won't be interesting. It is also because of the fighting of the hyumans, it is a truly boring tournament. In the first place, having dolls substitute the damage makes the tension dilute. Every year, every year, it is practically torture. My work as a master is also a harsh one. No, it was. This year, thanks to Makoto-kun, it is truly fun.
When talking about employment, at Makoto-kun's world, there's a fierce war called job-hunting, and it is an act where they have to show their own strengths and abilities to the nation and company. A fight where humans like Makoto-kun clash in a serious battle. There's no doubt that it would be more fun to watch than this

stupid show here. That's something I have earnestly wished to see even if only once. The humans that taught me this haven't participated in that fight yet, and before they participated, they ended up in this world. They sincerely talked about how glad they were, so it must be quite the harsh and serious fight.

The first round of the warrior category where it is a 'can you push your attack, can you defend against it?' In that fight, the defending boy was truly good.
There was the advantage that it was an opponent he already knew, but he was able to defend for 10 whole minutes the attacks of the boy that was clearly talented. The most he had were small cracks in several places of the doll, but in terms of a fight, it was the win of that defending kid. In the middle of it, it turned into some sort of dance performance where they confirmed each other's ability. It's been a while since I have watched a fight of swordsmen.
The next fight of warriors was a match where speed and handling stood out. The dagger boy tried to bring the fight to close range, and the spear girl handled him in a way that she could open the distance. <This is between Yuno and Daena. And yes, there's no chapter of this fight, I checked> Just that, the spear-wielding girl didn't go in the defensive, which is the difference between the previous battle. The difference between the distance of a spear and a dagger, it was a fight to see which one controlled that space, but it was pretty enjoyable. The highlight was the moment the handling was overwhelmed and the spear distance became dagger distance. The girl changed the way she held her spear in an instant and rotated the spear to escape from the predicament. At that time, I unconsciously leaked out a gasp. It was an amazing way of thinking and ability. In terms of handling, the boy was better, but it seems the instantaneous strength of the legs was better on the girl, so she created distance again and the battle of distance continued. By changing the way of holding the spear, one can adjust the length. It may sound easy when just saying it, but it was impressive that she was able to put it in practice.
In the middle of it, maybe he grasped the attack patterns, the boy's handling got better and began to push the girl. It was a difficult turn, but at the end, that girl used her own spear as a bait by letting it go and changing to bare-handed fight. I am surprised a girl of that age can fight that well. But of course, it was a gamble where

she had to enter the area of the dagger. And in truth, the boy countered the kick that came from his back and got the better of the spear girl. Well, it was a good fight that made me gasp at the end.
<Daena won>
And then, this time.
It was a fight between girls, but a girl suddenly charged in and the other girl begins doing an aria for attack magic. The fight began with an unconventional development. The set pattern of using a barrier and then unleashing your best magic was broken. An unprecedented start.
The one who ran had speed that could be comparable to that of the warrior category. Even so, the one who was doing the attack magic aria was able to finish it by the time half of that distance was closed. Fast. Too bad I wasn't able to hear the aria and the language clearly from the guests' seats where I was, but it was obvious that the aria itself was arranged, and it was a speed where she was aware to a certain extent the power of the spell and its success rate. Splendid. Students that have not even experienced real combat properly are able to reach the way of thinking that only a few adventurers are able to reach, moreover, able to apply it in battle. I don't want to see pretty robed magicians lined up and chanting the same aria in the battlefield.
It seems what was shot was a fire arrow that you can see anywhere. The speed was also normal. It's enough to give a passing score in a test.
When the running girl confirmed the activation of that spell, she soon stopped her straight path and changed into a charge to the left. There wasn't much waste of movement in her steps. She may be the type that can do many things skillfully. In that case, she would have to fight against a pure magician. I thought it would be something truly difficult.
The fire arrow was not the normal kind that I thought it was. Matching the change of direction, the arrow changed directions as well. I was surprised, truly surprised. To think that she would include a pursuing trait. But the surprise didn't end there. The girl that was supposed to be in a desperate situation had her staff shine a pale blue light. I didn't notice it at all. On top of that, she matched the trajectory of the arrow and pushed out her staff, then released the light to explode and was able to defend against it. And then, she tried to resume her approach.

There, a conversation was exchanged between the two. The arrow once again pursued, and it suddenly exploded at the back of the running girl. In this fight, this was the first thunderous sound that resonated in the grounds. The power was decent. Iya~, truly impressive.
The girl that was blown away by the blast had her doll damaged heavily. Maybe fragments hit her, the girl that activated the explosion approached the girl that had her posture broken and finished a short aria. Spirit magic huh. Having that much ability in attack magic, and to sum it up, a spirit magician huh. There's no doubt that she is the most complete participant of today.
Being grabbed by a stone hand, she declared her defeat and the match ends. And so, it connects to the silence that's currently occurring.

"… Counting the warrior category fights a while ago, this is truly discomforting"

"R-Really! Persisting in only the handling of the fight, a fight where it looked like there was no intention to win from the very beginning and only focusing on defending. And in the magician fight just now, there was one that can't even use magic properly and a magician that struggles by using petty tricks. To think that I would witness such a fighting manner, just what is the academy thinking?!"

"The student that won is the ill reputed Rembrandt daughter. Even though she is not even a noble, she lives in the noble's dormitory, a wannabe. She must have bought a tool that reduces the length of arias with her gold"

When I thought they finally opened their mouths, they began criticizing those splendid fights between the students. With those words as the fuse, more criticism came from others. Those are… the nobles of Limia. How stupid. Are they throwing the excuses that they thought up among them and their own henchmen? Including the bias in this tournament and the importance they put in weapons, these pigs truly have no saving. If they yield to gold and authority intervention, 'he'＜the founder＞, who wished to make an independent education facility, will lose his footing, and yet, why is it that hyumans don't follow the true nature of things, but instead put more importance in their greed and what brings benefits for

themselves?
This time, it seems the one who did several secret movements was Limia's Hopelace. That was the reason why the Limia nobles were making so much noise. Makoto-kun, just how were you able to get in trouble with another household that's so far away? Even if their second son is attending here, this is a huge academy. There aren't many chances of meeting.
But the flow of these conversations are truly unpleasant. The kids that finally gave color to this spectating, let's protect their honor for a bit.

"Please stop, it is unsightly"

"Stop it, bunch of idiots"

Eh? I was beaten to the punch.
Princess Lily and… Limia's King? This is quite the unusual pair giving their opinion. When the noisy bunch were directed these words, the people related to Limia and Gritonia fall silent. Most of the people complaining were Limia nobles, so the criticism to the students soon stopped.

"Their fights were truly magnificent. For people that have levels over 90, they showed strength fit for that number, and trying a new way of fighting is something important. The usual way of fighting that can be seen every year like the ones the other students showed, it would only be destroyed the moment they oppose the demon race. I feel that they are promising kids that can hold the future of us hyumans. They should be praised, and in no way should be looked down upon" (Lily)

After their utterance, the princess and king look at each other and didn't say anything else, but when the king nods once, the princess begins to talk. And in response, the Limia nobles asked.

"But princess, that kind of fighting is vulgar and cowardly. In no way is it a fighting a soldier and knight should…"

"Then, what about our country's hero-sama that repels the demons by capitalizing maneuverability in the sky? Is that fighting also cowardly? Are the knights and soldiers that had their lives saved

also cowardly? The foundation of your words itself are wrong. Including the match of just now, they thought properly and are increasing their own strengths, that's it. That's not vulgar nor shameful, and not to mention, cowardly by no means. Why is it that you can't understand that, no matter if it's slowly, the empire's army is learning a certain new way of fighting, and that's the same that's happening here?" (Lily)

"?!! Princess, what you said-"

"Is related to secret intel? How stupid. The kingdom that is fighting alongside us, the empire, have already learned how much of a threat the demon race is with our own bodies. If we are changing tactics to cope with them, it shouldn't be secret intel, but information that all hyumans should be sharing. You and the people that were making stupid talks as well, revise your way of thinking. Limia King, I am sorry for disturbing you when you spoke" (Lily)

Saying things you don't actually feel. If the arrival of the hero were a bit faster, maybe those words of the princess just now would actually be from the bottom of her heart. Ah, but he is no good huh. If the perfect hero of Limia would have met the wild group of the wasteland… Well, Princess Lily is already in a spot she can't come back from. It's already too late.
In times, the madmen's words sound more upright than any other. Just like hers just now.

"No, I was thinking almost the same thing. Don't mind it. Listen well, formality and tradition won't reduce the number of casualties in the battlefield. We can't protect both. Don't mistake the things we really have to protect and the things we don't have to protect. The three matches you repudiated, were all matches that stirred my heart. I unconsciously thought of the fighting of our country's hero-dono. The utterance of you bastards can be taken as insults to our hero-dono. They were truly unpleasant words. An insult to the hero-dono that is exposing herself to danger in the vanguard. Even if you are nobles in our country, no matter how much time passes, don't go changing pride for arrogance"

There were no objections to the king's words huh. The Limia nobles have all turned stiff.

Nevertheless, what an unexpected speech. The church related people and the people from Lorel that were listening also looked surprised.
From what I remember, he himself should be the old type of king that sticks to pride. He did look like he was extravagant. That perfect hero, it seems she also changed a bit the way the king thinks.
Well, I don't think she would be able to make him have doubts of the monarchy system, but seriously, can't underestimate that hero's influence. Is the ideal she is aiming for a democracy government? Most of the humans that fall to these world believe that this is the best type of government after all. I don't understand why they have that way of thinking. Maybe they receive that kind of education. Let's try asking Makoto-kun next time.
Well then, it turned silent.
I should say something as well or it will give a bad impression to Makoto-kun. In his case, I can't predict with whom or what he is connected with after all. In this time where the tournament has begun, I am busy most of the time, so there will be less chances for me to help him.

"… It may be rude of me to say my part after the king and the princess, but I also want to say it. I can't help praise the way they fought as splendid. I am of course a devout follower of the Goddess, but the power and technique they showed, and also the magic; people that use to their utmost every strength they have and improve it, for me, I even think that they would be able to easily defeat people that have only received the blessing of the Goddess. If those kind of people were to receive the blessing of the Goddess on top of that, they might be able to show a fight that would put the demons in the dust. But well, in my case, I would want them to be the next era of adventurers and play an active role in it though" (Root)

"… I don't consider that Falz-dono is denying the Goddess at all. I can tell that those words are purely from your expectations of them. Just like what you said, if they were to obtain the blessing of the Goddess, they would be able to increase that power even more. I am sure of it. This is my first time seeing students fight in this kind of way, so I am unable to evaluate them right this instant though"

The archbishop of the church that is close to the Limia King provides some cover for me, while advocating for the students and basically taking a position of being in favor.
When I follow the gaze of him, there's the Rotsgard Bishop. I see. He is asking the reason why they didn't know the existence of those students huh. They have been appointing new people a lot lately, so that responsibility should go to the previous bishop that's already dead. That woman, so misfortunate. She will probably get scolded.
And, that said bishop was eliminated in Makoto-kun's place. Well, the previous bishop was the one who dealt with the management of 'that organization' in Rotsgard. It seems the other related party Brait-sensei that was in the academy was eliminated as well.
Even if they haven't gone to the light yet, it would still create sparks, so I think that Makoto-kun is doing pretty well in his commitment to dealing with troubles.

"It seems the second round will be beginning soon. I am also looking forward to lunch, but I am truly looking forward to the tournament as well" (Root)

I say some light words to disperse the heavy atmosphere. As expected, I want to spectate comfortably. More so because I know that it will be worth the watch.
If possible, I wanted to sit together with Makoto-kun in the general seats and enjoy the show, but well, that's impossible.
Fufufu, at this rate, I can expect a lot from the third round as well.
If the students in this academy learn, even if a bit, from the fights just now and get their mindsets reformed, the founder of the academy would definitely be happy.
I remember the face of my past friend and narrow my eyes in nostalgia.

Chapter 125: Champion

Love is blind, love is darkness, the ups and downs of love show no discrimination. The people that disturb the love of someone else should get kicked by a horse and die, huh.

It was great that I didn't go to comfort Amelia afterwards.

Looking at the girl entwining her arms around Shiki's right arm, I honestly thought this.
Most likely, nothing special happened, but for her, there's no doubt that she passed a sugary time.
Shiki has a troubled expression and is worrying about how to deal with Amelia. While at it, I also entrusted the follow-up of Jin and Sif as well.

When I tell him to help the ones who have lost as well, Shiki does a bow and leaves the sit with Amelia.

Including the meal, the afternoon time passed safely and it is already the climax of the individual matches. In the warrior category, Jin defeated Daena, and after that, he heedlessly defeated the others with ease and continued advancing.

Disarming the opponent from his weapon, he attacked several times with light hits, and then, smashes an attack that breaks 2-3 dolls.

Instead of calling it docile, it was more like he was patiently holding in something while doing work. It was an unpleasant way of fighting. Dolls cost a good amount of money, so it seems he isn't thinking about the damage it is causing. That I am thinking this way makes me feel like I am becoming more merchant-like.

Even though he is only holding a wooden sword, that's pretty impressive. He uses body enhancing magic in a peculiar way, where he activates it the moment an attack connects.

Maybe the effect increases by only activating it for a second? From what I have seen, the attack power has increased more than when Jin uses attacks that are already enhanced.

But he hasn't used it in this kind of way until today.

… Did he grasp something in his fight between Misura?

It is hard to think that he left it as a secret weapon for the sake of this day after all. If that were the case, he would have used it in the fight with Misura. I haven't seen it in the mock battles with the Mist Lizard either.

I can only categorize it as an abnormal-level of sense and just accept it huh.

Tonight, let's try and see if I can do it as well.

Enhancing magic in itself is one of my specialties, so I feel like I will be able to master it to a certain extent. Seriously, I really have talented students. The things that have to be done, to learn, I am the one being taught after all.

What's left is the finals of the warrior category and magician category, and then the champion battle between the winners of both categories. It seems the winner will receive the cringy title of champion＜supreme ruler＞.

… In other words, Jin or Sif.

Well, it will most likely be Sif.

Leaving aside the question of whether Rembrandt-san will like that kind of title for his daughter, as a teacher, having both of my students as winners in both categories makes me happy.

My students are wiping the tournament in both the warrior and magician category, but Sif, who fought Amelia and Izumo in the magician category and got a practically flawless victory, is truly the very meaning of matchless.

Izumo also sprinted from the beginning, and while evading the

spells of Sif, he tried to attack her with short aria spells. But Sif soon created a stone wall around her surroundings with earth magic, and so, Izumo had no choice but to destroy that wall first. On the other hand, Sif is in a stage made wholly of stone, so even if she can't see her surroundings, she is able to sense them with her earth spirit magic. In a stage filled with advantages for her, Sif was able to accurately target Izumo even when she can't see him.

It may be simple, but it is a literal location advantage.

… You put up a good fight, Izumo.

Even in the face of the stone walls that were continuously regenerating, your unbreakable courage must have definitely given you points.

"Fumu, Sif is being completely favored by the rules. Fit for your pants is truly how this situation can be described. The chances for Jin to win are just…" (Tomoe)

"Impossible-desu wa ne. If he were able to shoot his attack with the sword to some extent, he might have had a chance, but even if he is able to, because of this rules, it feels like it would be seen as an attack magic and treated as breaking the rules. In terms of uses on the outside, a stone paved stage is improper. Moreover, in this situation where the warrior side has their close combat limited considerably, the element of Sif is overwhelmingly advantageous-desu wa" (Mio)

Tomoe and Mio also think that Sif's victory has already been settled.
Just like me.

Having the circumstances itself as your ally, is a truly fearsome power that the winners possess.

It is sad, but no one is thinking about the final round opponents of Jin and Sif.

Sif's opponent is a battery that is relatively resistant and packs decent punch. In other words, there's no problem.

The match will end before he even charges.

Jin's opponent is him, Hopelace's 'I will inherit this family'-sama. He clearly had a weapon of a whole different level, but his techniques were also not that bad.
Compared to the participants until now, his abilities were actually in a level that I would consider favorable. Just that, the sword that seems to have been brought from the warehouse of his house, is an excellent sword that can't even be compared to a wooden sword, and in his hands it is just a waste of a good sword.

The fighting of the Limia nobles that adhere to tradition and formality is also extravagant, no, it can enter into the actual combat type.

So he wasn't just a simple pompous child huh. But that just makes it more disappointing.

Jin probably intents to crush him completely. What he was trying to hold in will most likely be released in the fight with Hopelace. Even though he says he doesn't care what happens to him, he cares about his comrades. A person that no matter what he says, he just can't abandon the people that rely on him.

And well, that brings us to how it has turned out.

In the tournament everyone was so psyched up, a noble interfered with it, and as a result, their evaluations have been severely affected.

I think he is shouldering all their regrets.

"Waka? Is there something bothering you regarding the warrior category finals?" (Tomoe)

"Don't be stupid. There's not even the need to watch it. The results are obvious. Waka-sama, more importantly, how about we go eat some snacks while we wait for the next match? Should I add something to drink as well?" (Mio)

"Mio, the food is fine. If you want it, buy it. There's nothing bothering about the match. I just thought that 'it is Hopelace huh'"

(Makoto)

I respond to the words directed at me.

Other people might not have expected this development. But for me, Tomoe and the others, it was a pretty obvious result.

“Ah… That Limia boy. To think that a mere noble’s second son tried to meddle with Waka. Honestly, I pity him” (Tomoe)

“Well then, how will Jin settle it? I wonder if Hopelace-kun will be able to participate in the team battles tomorrow. That’s the question… hehe” (Makoto)

I don’t know why he hates me that much, but he came at me this persistently, so I hope he shows a decent fight. A wish that if the two people at my side hear it, they would smile wryly.

I hear the voice of the announcer presenting the participants of the warrior category finals and I turn to look.

3 matches left.

The first day of the tournament is finally nearing its end.

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“Winner, Sif Rembrandt!”

The Hopelace idiot is buying time huh. Maybe for the sake of preparing another dirty hand.

The warrior category that was scheduled to begin first was changed and the magician category happened first.

The winner was Sif, just like how it was announced just now.

As expected, with this rules, her strength gets emphasized. If only the earth element wasn’t spirit magic, there would still be a chance to fight back but…

Her opponent is someone that is one year higher than us, and it

seems that after graduating he would become a sword serving in the imperial court as a researcher. And that said person is currently sticking out his head from the stone paving with his body buried and crying.

Before the match began, it seems they exchanged words. The contents of that conversation probably got on Sif's nerves. And quite a lot at that.

A bit after the match began, the swept-back haired man that confronted Sif –self-proclaimed the highest firepower in history- fell into a hole that opened in the floor. Or so I thought, but everything above the neck stuck out and that hole soon closed.

She should have been able to settle it all with that one move, but maybe Sif was controlling the pressure, she only used that spell as a restrain.

Losing his staff and barrier in a second, he could only watch the woman's feet as she approached. In his field of vision, he must be looking at the smiling face of Sif. She grabs the staff in her right hand and after turning sideways, she taps the tip on her left hand, resembling the gesture of what a teacher would do when explaining to a student. An appearance filled with composure.

When the distance of both was reduced to about 1 meter, Sif points that staff to her opponent. He should have just surrendered as soon as possible, but he just seemed to be shouting something and was not surrendering.

That thing is actually a senpai. Makes me laugh.

With the sphere at the tip of the staff, she lifts his head up by putting it below his jaw and pushing up. And then, after looking down at him, Sif turns to the referee.

'Still not going to turn the verdict?' is what her looks told.

There was no reason to judge that the winner was not decided yet. It was clearly the win of Sif, so it should be fine to just announce that. Even if they prolong this more, it would just be her doing a

finishing spell and further hurting the pride of the opponent.

Sif sighs and narrows her eyes. A short aria leaks out from her mouth.

What a foolish fellow.

Maybe he saw the reformed Sif after her return and has misunderstood her for a kind high-class lady that wouldn't do a finishing move, or maybe he still has some sort of method to win. I don't know, but whichever it is, he is a fool.

The eyes of the man open wide. And then, in the moment his mouth was probably going to announce his surrender, a red light converged into a ball and was silently fired at the floor just in front of the man. I thought 'It is that'.

And yes it was.

In front of the man, heat and fire exploded in an instant, and that red light of the fire made the already bright venue into an even brighter one.

H-Heartless.

Instantly, the 3 dolls blew up and an unbearable scream resonated from the man. Looking at the scale, she held back. But that was still enough to destroy all the dolls huh. In terms of holding back, magic definitely works differently from swordsmanship.

That magic as well. The spell that Sif created to counter the approach of Zwei-san, flare pillar. An arranged spell based on the fire pillar spell.
Setting the activation point somewhere slightly below the ground, charging it and by lowering its effective time, it increases its explosive power. An oblique mass of fire spouts from her opponent's feet.

To get hit by that right in front of you, I can't see it as anything other than torture. As I thought, at that moment, I was sure that woman's true character hasn't changed.

Maybe sensei felt something from that as well, he seemed to be whispering something.

The effective time was low, and before the screams of the man disappeared, the fire did so first. She used the man's head as the indicator, and by using the dug-up stone paving of the stage as a gathering point, she was able to control the range of her spell.
In truth, the further she is, the lower the power it has, but the impact it left is plenty enough.

The guest seats gave big cheers.

There were scalds in the cheeks of the man, and a part of his hair was burned. His whole face was trembling, and there was not a single trace left of the confidence he had when the match began.
That level of scalding can be easily healed by receiving treatment in the waiting room.
It shouldn't leave any scars.
Just that, the wounds he received in his heart might leave a mark.

After the referee announced Sif's victory, she bend her knees towards the 'severed head'. The weak-looking slender arms take ahold of his neck, and just like that, she stands up and lifts the man as if nothing happened. A strange scene of a female student lifting a male student with one hand.
The man simply stood still with a frightened face, and after that, without meeting eyes, Sif bows to both sides of the spectating audience and leaves the stage.

"Well done"

I call out to Sif who was returning to the waiting room. Seeing that overwhelming victory, I couldn't think up any counter-measures.
It's honest admiration.

If possible, I want to get the title of champion though…

"Thanks, Jin. It would have been fine to finish it faster, but that man, it seems tomorrow he will be in the team of Hopelace, so I scared him a bit" (Sif)

“That wasn’t a bit. Even Sif is angered by this tournament huh?” (Jin)

“… I will let you guess. But I am jealous of you who are in the warrior category. That’s as much as I will say. Jin, I think you understand what I mean” (Sif)

“Yeah, of course I do” (Jin)

“Great. When being shown just how much the power of money and authority can do, I also feel like I have to reflect as well… Well then, I will be thinking up a plan to get the title of champion with relief okay? I will be watching so, I wish you luck” (Sif)

In the middle of the conversation, Sif makes a face as if scoffing at herself, and after finishing her conversation with me, she disappeared into the corridor that leads to the waiting room.

Maybe she was feeling self-disgust towards her past-self that resembled Hopelace.

… Well, it is true that there wasn’t much difference. Not like I can speak that out of my mouth though.

I do feel anger at those unreasonable actions. And also, I am feeling the weight of defeating Misura and Daena. I haven’t fought her directly but, Yuno as well.

This is the individual battles in the tournament. Of course, I was expecting to fight my own comrades. But I didn’t imagine that I would have to clash with them so fast, and to not be able to show my own strength to the audience and, more importantly, to those people. Well, I do feel like I was able to show some of it when we fought with each other. But, the only ones who were able to properly show it off were me and Sif.

Even if they speak nonchalant words, cheer for us, or don’t say anything at all; when thinking about how I would feel if I were in their position, I end up understanding how they feel.

Well… this trouble is related to sensei though.

When I had a connection with sensei, I was prepared for a certain extent of trouble… but to receive interference from an outsider that nobody cares, I don't like it.

I just don't like it.

Ilumgand Hopelace.

"Jin. Jin Roan! The finals are beginning. Hurry up!"

An official in duty calls me out.

I see. It's time huh.

I will finally be able to fight against him.

"… I will soon go" (Jin)

Turning my body, I hurry to the corridor that connects to my entrance side.

Walking in the corridor that continues straight, I could tell that there were several presences I recognized. Lately, there have been moments this has happened.
In the times I am concentrating to my maximum, I can slightly grasp the situation in my surroundings. Nice. That means my condition is at its best.

Shiki-san, Amelia, Misura, Daena, Yuno, Izumo. They are probably guarding the surroundings to prevent any dirty tricks. So that's why they didn't show themselves.

Above, there's sensei and what seems to be his two close aides. I can somehow tell that they are crazy strong. Like this, even if I put them as an objective, I wonder if it is even possible to reach their backs.

… Interesting.

Regarding sensei, I can't tell well.
Maybe I am still not in the level where I can feel anything from him. He gives off a presence that is thinner than even normal

hyumans.

“Sensei, please watch” (Jin)

I silently voice my enthusiasm. It wasn’t directed to anyone in particular, a simple whisper.

I reach the exit of the corridor.

My field of vision instantly turns brighter. In front of me, there’s the stage. Maybe the excitement of the magician match still remained, the audiences’ mood was already in its climax.

Each step I do it firmly, and after advancing one by one, I finally go up the stage.

“Jin Roan, please comply with the arranged time of the match. As a person participating in this tournament, your attitude is not the proper one. We will subtract points for that”

“… I’m sorry. I will be careful” (Jin)

I came as soon as I was told, and yet, I get this.

But, it doesn’t matter.

Subtracting points only affects the verdict. No matter who the referee sides with, it is pointless in this fight.

I match my gaze with that bastard.

It’s him. The intruding outsider.

There’s no need to worry. I won’t leave wounds in your body that would hinder your participation for tomorrow. In those two days starting tomorrow, we will be having you serve in our favor at the team battle competition.

Listen well, stop when the dolls are destroyed.

I don’t know what that guy would say if there’s damage transferred to him after destroying the 3 dolls.

I have already finished my training with all the matches I had until now.

I will precisely destroy 2 and finish it there.

“Oioi, this is a historic armor handed down in my family. In this kind of formal places and in the battlefield, the Hopelace household will always go with this equipment. Even if you complain at me with those eyes, it will only trouble me. The rules also accept it”

With an arrogant face, the second son is saying something to me.

Seriously, what an out-of-place misunderstanding.

I don’t care if your equipment has become even stronger than in the semi-finals. And I don’t care if the match was postponed because you were preparing the equipment.
I was just thinking about how to finish you.

“I am not complaining here. It is obvious to do your best. Let’s make this a good fight” (Jin)

“… I don’t like that attitude. Don’t go giving up early and bore the audience, got it? Just think of this as bad luck for taking the class of Raidou and frantically struggle”

Audience.

I see. There were those people too.

If these were my past-year self, I would be concerned about the eyes of scouts I don’t even know of and fight while minding them.

Right now, I don’t care who and from what country is looking though.

“Let’s both do our best”

Hiding his real self, he sends words he doesn’t even mean and only maintains his righteous front.

Maybe he felt that the exchange was over, I could tell that his right

hand strengthened the grip in his sword.

The referee nods at the signal of the second son and lifts his hand high up.

Hahaha, he is been totally bribed.

“Well then! Ilumgand Hopelace versus Jin Roan! The school festival tournament of the Rotsgard Academy, final match of the warrior category, begins!!”

So strange.

In front of me, there’s a prodigy senpai with his whole body clad in incredible equipment I would have a hard time seeing in my life. And yet, a kohai like me, who only has one wooden sword in hand, am not feeling any fear at all.

Maybe the days fighting with the blue-scaled lizardman forged me this way. Or it might be because compared to the level 70 Hopelace, I am higher with my level that’s over 90.

I place my right hand that’s wielding the sword to the front and prepare the stance in my upper half.

The senpai approaches my location with light movements one wouldn’t be able to imagine from someone wearing a plate armor. Those are movements that told that his whole equipment is endowed with weight reduction, body strengthening or enchantment magic.

But his moves are too obvious.

I can easily tell that he intends to swing downwards the big sword he brandishes with both hands.

Too slow.

It felt like I was watching frames.

If I wanted to, I could have cut him several times before he swung down his sword.

Along with a yell filled with fighting spirit, a brilliant giant sword is swung down.
I thought of evading it, but I soon changed opinions and do one step forward.

His left hand is just there to support, so I swing my wooden sword from below and hit his right hand which is wearing a much exaggerated gauntlet. Just like I thought, Ilumgand drops his giant sword that was being lifted mainly with his right hand.

The grounds fall silent.

I turn my back and take a bit of distance. I turn, facing him once again, and take a stance with my wooden sword.

He doesn't pursue. He won't do it.

I will get rid of his 'fair and square' farce.

Maybe he understood what I was trying to do. He once again lifts up his sword.

His face was soon filled with anger.

Oioi, what are you doing by telling your opponent you are not calm?

Try hiding it… just like me.

"…"

Looks like he doesn't want to shame himself.

Your country's king and your relatives must be watching this match.

I wait for my match opponent to finish his slow body enhancing spell.

What. Is it already time for your special move?

What a hurried fellow.

Oh, right. That attack just now, the doll's damage is… doesn't look

like it's much. Even if there is, it would just be a small crack somewhere.

He has brought an armor with really high defensive power.

After his body enhancement, he does a low-posture dash. The moment his opponent enters the range of his sword, he does his special move, a horizontal swipe.

Ilumgand dashes just as the information I gathered states.

I didn't gather that much information about him, and yet, I have been hearing about his special attack and the patterns of that special move.

He is not trying to hide it, so that's an obvious result though.

Because the action of closing the distance and the action for attack are done in two different executions, there was a lot of time to interfere with it. If one uses body enhancement in the interval of the attack and does one step backward, it can be avoided.
Well, in my case, I can avoid it without enhancing myself though.

Even if the frame gets slightly faster, it still doesn't change anything.

In truth, there isn't that much difference in speed between me and Ilumgand. But maybe because my brain processes information continuously, I feel like my opponent's movements are slow.

It might be thanks to the fact that I am always thinking about how to do this or that in order to decrease the amount of delay in my movements.

"?!!"

A horizontal swipe approaches.

I hit the core of that giant sword with all my strength.

Once again, the sword falls to the ground.

It may be a good sword, but if the person holding it is this guy, there's no point.

He turns both of his hands, which were holding the giant sword, upwards, and just like that, his hands trembled.

Hahaha, in other words, his physical strength is on the same level as my past-self the first time I fought Zwei-san.

Holding back quite a bit, I present his open face with a swing of my wooden sword.

The doll shakes greatly and cracks.

The match is not over yet.

I once again take distance from him, take my stance, and wait.

"??!! Referee!!"

He calls out the referee, and while holding his face, he pointed a finger at me with his other hand while shouting: 'what's going on here?!'

If you are a swordsman, at least pick up your sword.

The referee nods several times.

Maybe he will say something like fight with your fists?

Well, I don't care one bit even if I have to fight with my bare hands though.

"Jin Roan, I can see that you have been taking a stance of only waiting for your opponent to attack. Make sure to use your all your power to fight in an active way"

"Understood. I will finish this already" (Jin)

"?!!"

Ilumgand takes the sword in his hands once more.

His proud white skin has become red like someone drunk.

Well then, let's go for the first and last attack.

The time I will leave you all beaten up will be in the team battle. In order to have you face shame in both of those tournaments, I will spare you with just this much in the individual matches.

In the first place, if I were the only one taking him out, I don't know what everyone would do to me later.

"Your name was Jin right?! Jin Roan! You bastard… You bastard, I won't forgive you! Wa-"

Rules this, rules that, what a pesky tournament.

After properly confirming the referee gave the resume sign, I, for the first time, run forward and close the distance.

Maybe he didn't even expect such an obvious move, Ilumgand stops what seemed to be threats or whatever he was trying to accomplish with that, and leaks out a voice of surprise.

Seeing Ilumgand prepare his sword in a hurry, I close the distance to an even closer range than my sword, and kick his armor-protected stomach.
Because he was protected by his armor, there is no damage to his body, but the shock will still transmit, so he was blown backwards and fell on his ass.

I swung downwards to his head, but Ilumgand's sword managed to defend in time and the attack line to his head was intercepted. At this rate, the wooden sword will break in two.
I pull my upper-half and shift the trajectory of the sword, preventing my sword from clashing with his.

Passing the giant sword, the wooden sword reaches down and just like that, I changed to an upwards slash.

The attack aiming at his face beautifully connected, and the head of Ilumgand bends backwards greatly. And just like that, the back of his head hits the stone paving.

But without caring about that, I punch with the arm I haven't straightened completely.

When I thought Ilumgand's face caved in with that hit, the stone paving makes a dull sound and cracks, and the sound resonated in the grounds.

I throw away the wooden sword that's not even mine to the fumes of the stone paving that cracked and step back to where the referee is.

"Referee, it seems the three dolls have broken you know" (Jin)

I went overboard.

I just glanced at it for a bit, but not only did all the dolls get destroyed, it seems I ended up breaking his face lightly as well.

I can tell he is bleeding.

Well, it isn't a wound that can't heal.

If he doesn't take part in the team battles with only that much, we can just settle it outside.

But, he will participate right? He was made this much of a fool after all.

He plans on using more dirty tricks to take revenge right?

After overwhelming Ilumgand Hopelace and shaming him, I win.

In my victory, I didn't injure him that much. I think I was able to achieve my objective.

If I get the impressions of Shiki-san and sensei, it would make me happy.

As the winner, my name was called, and while I was thinking those kind of things, I left the stage.

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This year's champion is Sif huh.

If the whole stage is turned into swamp, the current Jin won't be able to do anything after all. On top of that, Sif was one-sidedly floating on the surface and was making movements as if surfing.

The moment he repelled the exploding beam, I unintentionally let out a shout. Jin's highlights were pretty impressive as well.

Well, it didn't serve me as a reference for anything though.

Because you know, those kind of feats that are like a mass of instinct and sense, there's no way I can copy them.

In my perspective, the feat of changing the trajectory of a spell that Amelia showed looks like a more realistic goal.

Tomoe and Mio said it was interesting.

Those two probably see the technique Jin showed as something that can be realistically achieved.

The flare pillar that Sif showed in the match before, it seems there was no turn for it in this occasion. If there's no one drawing near, there aren't many chances of using it after all.

I secretly named that spell: Power Geyser.

The first time she activated that spell, I reflexively said in a low voice 'P-Power Geyser…' A memorable spell.

Instead of calling it a spell that counters approaches, it is more like a technique that crushes approaches.

As long as it is a magic spell, she can move the activation point or change the effective time, so there should be many different uses for it, but luckily, it seems Sif has not thought that far yet.

That firepower can affect the terrain, moreover, if she were to combine it with land mines, she would be a stronghold.

This time as well, I whispered 'The Power Geyser? So ruthless'.

The two that were accompanying me have sharp ears, and while remembering the spell, they said:

“… Power… Geyser”

And their eyes were glittering. It made me have a bad presentiment.

I don’t think this is a spell that’s fit for you guys.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

A dark room.

The poor-looking man that is sitting on the couch seems to be muttering something.

Before leaving, it seems a person came to give a report to the man, but after the messenger finished what he came to do, he soon left the room.

“I understand. I am not wavering. I understand it all. Who do you think I am?”

The voice that had remarkably increased in volume, resonates in the room.

The tumult of the night’s festival didn’t reach that place one bit.

The voice of the man that was hanging his head down didn’t stop through the whole night.

Chapter 126: If it's Raidou, the chances of that development are low

"Sorry, Raidou-dono. My strength was not enough"

[Please don't worry about it]

After congratulating the students' good fights, I returned to the company and Rembrandt-san was waiting there with an apology.

It seems the call of the merchant guild was related to me, and the result was not favorable.

"Looks like your activities as a company are gathering attention to you. Most likely in the country level" (Rembrandt)

[Country huh. I don't remember doing anything to be disturbed for though]

I do think there are countries that have an interest in me. But I don't remember having anyone who would want to interfere with me.

"Just picking their attention is plenty" (Rembrandt)

But Rembrandt-san begins talking as if he read my mind.
What does he mean by that?

"At what country will Kuzunoha Company go, and also at which will Raidou-dono go; because they have an interest, they want to know. And because of that, they would obviously investigate. You know, those kind of movements the countries do, we merchants pick up that information in a pretty early stage" (Rembrandt)

Yeah, I understand that much. When there's friendship between the

countries and the merchant, there will be times when they will hear information about it as a part of information gathering. Just like Aion Kingdom, there are some merchants that work as intelligence members as well.

“Up to this point it is still fine. But the problem comes after this. The merchants that obtain the information sometimes implant their own idea of things. For example, I participate in the government affairs of the Limia Kingdom and I’m in friendly terms with them, but in truth, it seems the Limia Kingdom is interested in the merchant named Raidou. And then I can say something like: ‘By the way, that company has this strange point, can you please have the guild investigate and deal with it?’” (Rembrandt)

[Based on that example, it would mean that Limia Kingdom is feeling something strange from my store, so they had the merchant investigate about it, right?]

Rembrandt-san smiles at my opinion.

“That’s not it, Raidou-dono. In this case, Limia took an interest in you and just wants to obtain information” (Rembrandt)

[But]

“The second half is just a personal intention of the merchant. That person doesn’t think well of you. This kind of things are unexpectedly prevalent. They don’t only get used by the country, but they also use them in order to bring benefits to them. Well, I also do that, so I am not in a position to say things of others” (Rembrandt)

… E-Ehm, that person is not lying, but doesn’t intent to correct that misunderstanding, is what he is trying to say huh. Uwa, how dirty.

“The Merchant Guild also can’t ignore the companies that are being denoted by countries as dangerous. Especially when many people say so” (Rembrandt)

[So that means the Kuzunoha Company has picked the attention of at least that many countries, and the companies that are in this

town don’t view that in a favorable way]

“Not all of them, but the amount of people that are like that is most likely not small. I also heard that the Church said something recently as well. And it is dubious if it was actually directly from the Church. The Church is receiving offerings from the companies, so they can’t ignore their voices. In regards to that, I am deliberately pulling my distance though, so I am estranged in that subject. Tsige is a town that has a bit of problems with the God’s religion after all” (Rembrandt)

[I want to coexist with the people of the same trade, but it seems that will be difficult huh]

“It is a relationship where they steal benefits from each other after all. The closer they are, the harder it becomes. Even I, if you were to open a store in the times when I was troubled with the curse, I would have definitely done something” (Rembrandt)

Is that how it works?

“You should prepare yourself to a certain extent, Raidou-dono. Even if it’s a competition between people of the same trade, if the battle is decided fast, the one who lost can recover. Luckily, in this land, there are many satellite towns. If they have the drive, there are decent amount of opportunities” (Rembrandt)

[Thanks for the warning]

“No, no, here I am saying something admirable, but I wasn’t able to actually be of much use. Being thanked for that would trouble me. My daughters didn’t receive any serious wounds in the tournament, and yet, they were able to bring the title of champion, the best result of all. I am always being favored by Raidou-dono” (Rembrandt)

[That was their ability. Please watch them tomorrow. I don’t think I will be able to go after all]

“… The Merchant Guild will probably question you strictly about your company’s circulation of goods. They are even suspecting that

you have connections with the demon race. You should have some sort of proof, or prepare a fit amount of gold and calm it down with money; you will have to think about your counter-measure precisely. If there's anything I can do…" (Rembrandt)

Proof huh. Don't have anything like that. There's the method of having Tomoe or Shiki place hypnotic suggestions on them, but it won't solve the root of the problem.
Also, the circulation of goods in our company?
Not only the Gold Highway, we don't even use the normal highways. We use the route via Asora, a method that can't be obstructed.
But this world doesn't use teleportation as a general method of transportation. Because the success rate is low. If I were to say that we are using a teleportation mean that is 100% successful, they will obviously demand me to share the technique, the aria of it. If that happens, then the country taking scene wouldn't be strange.

I remember the words I said to Tomoe when we were spectating.

[You are already doing plenty enough Rembrandt-san. It's alright. We will take care of it]

"I see. It was unnecessary worry. Well then, I will excuse myself. I want to at least congratulate my daughters before they go to sleep" (Rembrandt)

[Have a safe trip. Sleep well]

"Yeah, same for you. Good night, Raidou-dono" (Rembrandt)

Rembrandt-san returns to praise Sif and comfort Yuno.

Tomorrow is the team battles, so they are probably already sleeping. In that case, would he wake them up? I don't think he would.

"Lime, you are here right?" (Makoto)

"Yes" (Lime)

"Just in case, watch over Rembrandt-san's return. If there's any

strange presence, shift with someone else, and follow it” (Makoto)

“Understood” (Lime)

I have left the students in Shiki and Akua’s hands.

Yareyare, I am asking everyone work that’s not related to the business huh.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

It was a shocking tournament.

Several students that were not that much different from the others in the beginning of the year, showed power that overwhelmed not only classmates, but also upperclassmen.
A student that, even when she had ability, was absent from the Academy for a long time because of health issues and recently returned. A student that entered because of scholarship but was in no way top-class.
And those two fought for the place of champion this year.

When the school festival is open for exhibition, the library is closed. And of course, my work as a librarian is also in break, so I went to watch the tournament that is the main event of the festival.

I once again thought this.

Raidou, Kuzunoha Company.

It’s that. That is the reason of this storm. And also, my hope. Currently, he is still not even marked by the upper stratum of the academy.

If he were to help, I am sure that the frontline Limia and Gritonia maintain would push north in an instant, and the recovery of Kaleneon would become a realistic objective.

He was able to make those students grow that much in such a short amount of time after all.

Soon after the individual battles of the tournament finished, I stand

up from my seat and was about to return, but Raidou called me out.

He said that he wanted to talk with me.

I don't know what he intended, but if it is an invitation from him, I can't refuse. I readily consented and asked for the meeting time.

The time he set could be considered late at night.

At that time, I enter his store through the back door and head to his room at the second floor. He told me that he will be in his room, so I could enter whenever I wanted.

… No matter what he asks of me, I intend to accept it.

"Raidou-sensei, its Eva. Is it okay to enter?" (Eva)

After knocking, I wait for his response. Well, even if I say so, he can't speak in common language. The characters of 'enter' appear on the door, and the lock is opened with magic.

I enter.

My relationship with him is, honestly speaking, a relationship where I am in a pretty disadvantageous position. I am wishing a lot from him, and yet, he said that he didn't wish anything from me.

It was okay to stay seated when receiving me, but Raidou went through the trouble of standing and greeting me. Even though it would be acceptable for me if he acted haughtier.

[I am sorry for calling you this late. Today all my employees are out and I am the only one here you see]

Alone.

Those words increase my tension a bit. Could it be, he really called me with those intentions?

If it really turns out the way I am thinking, it would be a desirable development. I will finally be able to fulfill something he wishes for. I would be able to repay him.

“If it’s Raidou-sensei that’s calling, I don’t care what time it is” (Eva)

[Please stop]

“Congratulations for the victory of your student in today’s individual battles. After that it was pretty hectic you know? They were asking who the one who trained them was” (Eva)

[I just helped their talent bloom. It wasn’t the achievement of anyone else]

“You are modest. And yet, the teachers that give them classes as well are all raising their hands and saying: ‘It’s me, It’s me!’ and causing much trouble. Of course, when they understand that they all have your class in common, the point of the spear will face sensei though” (Eva)

Even when I congratulated him for Sif Rembrandt’s victory, he didn’t show any pride.
He just said that it is the student’s talent. It has been half a year since spring. In just that amount of time, they were able to show a growth that can’t be considered just doubled, and there’s no doubt that it was thanks to him.

If any of the four major powers knew of this, they would definitely come to recruit him. With a far better offer than being a temporary teacher. If Raidou were to accept that offer, my interactions with him will decrease. But, for some strange reason, I don’t think that will happen.
He will most likely not affiliate with any country no matter what favorable conditions they put out. There’s no definite reason for this thought of mine, but that’s how I feel. It may be something borned from our short association.

[For the sake of avoiding that from happening, please try not to say anything unnecessary, okay?]

“Of course. I won’t do anything that would detriment sensei” (Eva)

[And well, about why I called you today…]

Here it comes.

With a composed smile, I wait for his next words.

[Before that, please keep this a secret from Ruria as well. Promise me that you will keep this just between you and me]

Even Ruria?

Well, I don't think this is something that I would be able to tell my little sister Ruria.

I nod.

[Well then]

"!!"

He beckons me, and as if being careful that other people don't see it, he writes in small characters.

I involuntarily gulp.

That is…

The proposal that Raidou denoted…

Was a content that I was unable to predict, something that blew away everything I previously thought of.

It was a proposal that was so shocking that it almost made me forget about the madness inside of me.

"Sensei, no, Raidou-san. Are you serious about this?" (Eva)

[There's no joke here. I will give you a deferral of two days. I will hear your answer the day after tomorrow, at this time]

"The day after tomorrow?!" (Eva)

[Yeah. It would be the same even if you think about it for long right? It is also because of my circumstances as well. That's all the business I had. It is already late, so if you don't have any tasks to do

after, please rest in one of our free rooms]

No way. Is he telling me to decide something so important in only two days?
Moreover, leaving it a secret from my little sister?

I was looking forward to tomorrow's team battles.

But I already don't care about it anymore. This is not the time to be spectating matches.
I even forgot about my plan of seducing Raidou if push comes to shove. I borrow one room and end up passing a sleepless night.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

At Gotetsu's back store.

After lending a room to Eva-san, I went out to meet with her little sister Ruria.

Even in this late of a time, Gotetsu is still in business. As usual, they are also in operation today.

[Sorry for coming at this time]

"If it's Raidou-san, I don't mind. But sorry, because I have been working every day till late, the fatigue has been accumulating a bit. Is it okay if you make it short?" (Ruria)

[Yeah, I will finish it fast. Ruria, keep this a secret from Eva-san. You definitely have to. There's something I want you to decide on]

…….

"E-Eeeeehh?!" (Ruria)

[The day after tomorrow, I will come to hear your answer. I am sorry for coming at this late of a time]

"The day after tomorrow?! Wai-, Raidou-san?! Raidou-saaan?! He is serious right? That person is not the type that jokes around much. I can't go to sleep now. If it was going to turn out like this, Raidou-

san could have at least left an energy drink～～” (Ruria)

Tomorrow, no matter how I explain to the Merchant Guild, more lies and troubles will appear. Even so, as long as I have made one lie, I can’t make it as if the lie never happened.

It was no good to just leave things superficially. If that’s the case, I should just…

Inside of me, a thought that would affect this world heavily has been settled.

Chapter 127: Raidou breaks

Without using the waiting room, I continue on to the room that has written ‘representative room’.

I have been called by the Merchant Guild’s branch representative.

When a company is established, the people doing the application probably use the representatives here.

Or maybe it is the opposite?

I don’t care about denominations though, especially right now.

The reception boy that guided me didn’t enter the room. He just does a bow and leaves.

What’s inside is an extravagant desk and one man that looks like the representative placing an elbow on it, and what seems to be two of his guards.

Maybe he is the vice-representative.
Because of his atmosphere which resembles that of a bodyguard, I subconsciously thought this way.

It has been a while since I came to this town, but until now, I have never met anyone in the upper stratum of the Merchant Guild.

Even when I have business here, it is normally completed just by going to the reception.

In the cases when there’s the need for a detailed interview, it is done by someone in the management and it is normally the same people.

This is the first time I have entered the deep parts of the guild.

Thinking that the problem has turned to the point where I am send

here, my mood turns heavy.

“It’s nice to see you here, Raidou-dono. Please sit”

The representative that was sitting, stands from his sit and urges me to take my own.

We enter a space for reception and I wait for him to take his sit first before sitting myself.

There are two sofas facing each other and a desk in between. No matter which one you look at, it was obviously expensive.

The general glass used in this world is manufactured from a rare metal that looks like crystal. If I were to use the manufacture process of my world, it might turn into a trade.
In the wasteland there was quite a lot of glass, so I haven’t thought about it much until now though.

At any rate.

It may also be because I don’t have much connection to this kind of things, but this room is, as expected, extremely different from my own work room.

In my reception room, there’s a simple desk and minimum space. I haven’t done anything like putting out expensive articles and spreading a rug.

Thinking about the visitors, I might have to consider this point a bit. But doing so now would not be appropriate.

My thoughts strayed into a peaceful direction for a bit.

[It seems I have been called here but, what business do you have with me?]

“… Ah, you can’t speak, right. Nice to meet you, I am the representative of the Merchant Guild in the Rotsgard branch”

[My name’s Raidou. I am honored to meet you]

“Normally, it is customary to first increase your services in the guild a bit more before meeting face to face like this, but this time, I have met with a certain bad matter. Truly regrettable”

The representative knits his brows and looks at me.

There may be slight disgust towards my outward appearance, but I can tell that there’s more displeasure towards the problem which is me.

Growing the company in a smooth manner and reach a standing where I meet the representative; even I would have preferred that development.

Instead of urging for his business again, it would be better to just wait for his words.

“The guild has received several doubts towards you”

[Doubts]

“That’s right. Normally, this kind of enquiries decrease in the period of the school festival, but the number of enquiries about contact information increase”

[Meaning there are less complains]

“… Yeah. But in Kuzunoha Company’s case, from the 4 major powers, Limia and Lorel; aside from those two, the other countries have brought out several cases. All of them have been from the representatives of the companies that are connected to countries requesting investigation regarding your goods and its circulation. There are even dangerous opinions in some”

[Dangerous opinions?]

That’s not peaceful.

The face of the representative that was already severe had his brow wrinkle even more.

Interrupting his words might not have been good, but I had to ask.

“That the Kuzunoha Company is… having the cooperation of the demon race to obtain your goods and for the circulation of it. In other words, it implies that you are from the demon race camp, and while betraying all the hyumans, you are wringing profits. Those are the opinions”

That’s stupid.

In what kind of way did they think in order to reach that conclusion?

When I heard the words of Rembrandt-san regarding the demon race matter, I didn’t think the distrust would be that deep.

They are infiltrated in Academy Town as well, but there’s no hyuman that has noticed. At least, for all I know. Counting Rona-san, I have made contact with 3 demons already. But I made sure of my surroundings and there was no change. In other words, that talk about my relationship with the demon race is complete fabrication.

For harassment, the degree is way too high.

[Unthinkable. We are using respectable methods to do business, and I promise that I am not receiving assistance of the demon race in my company activities]

“That’s probably how it really is”

[Eh?]

I react to the words the representative whispers lowly. What does that mean?

“Regarding the goods, we received confirmation of the Church that the material quality and its manufacturing process are safe. When we told the companies that brought their views on this, they retracted their comments”

Ignoring my questioning words, he continued.

Church.

What happened a while ago huh.

In that case, the bishop with a sexy voice properly maintained her promise.

I don't trust the hyumans that are connected to the Goddess, but I am slightly relieved knowing that the promise was abided.

"The problem is the circulation. We investigated this part as well, but the wagons that are thought to be from the Kuzunoha Company or anything resembling a carriage, we were unable to confirm any of those"

[We mostly get our supply of raw materials from the Guild's market]

"That's clearly a lie. With the raw materials that have been sold and what has been sold in Kuzunoha Company for around two months, even by making a rough calculation, the numbers clearly don't match. It is obvious that there's some other method aside from buying"

Two months?

They were investigating since so long ago?

I didn't receive any reports regarding that.

[This is my first time hearing of such an investigation though]

"As long as there are opinions we can't ignore, the Guild must move. And if it's about a company that's connected to the Guild, it is a matter of course. The complains towards your company increased just recently, but there have been complains of people that have even brought detailed documents since a while ago"

[If you said something, I would have cooperated]

"Cooperation? You? If you are telling me to believe that, that's a pretty naïve way of thinking. Like this, it seems you are minding the investigation, but there are many ways of investigating that won't alert the target. Moving people around secretly is not the only

way of investigation”

[Is it naïve to proof your innocence if there’s suspicions?]

“… I see, buying antipathy huh. Your way of thinking is childish. You don’t know how to conduct. I am surprised that you are able to be in a position of ordering others. Truly surprised. The end result of thoughtlessly managing a company is not good”

…

Why does he have to say so much?

Did I say something wrong?

It makes me angry that he is clearly looking down on me.

[What is it you want me to do?]

“Did I touch a sensitive point? Well, fine. Let’s enter the main issue. I want to hear your circulation method. And I want you to promise us that if it’s any sort of magic or technique, you will share the knowledge of it”

Don’t screw around.

If you are talking about childish, isn’t your side more childish?

You want to hear my circulation method, and give it to you?

[Is there no way to solve this with money?]

I will at least try asking.

“With gold huh, of course, it is possible. There’s nothing that can’t be solved with gold between merchants. But even if the sharing of the circulation method is sealed, you will still need to at least tell me. And, I don’t think you have enough gold to pay for it”

[Sadly, it is not a method I can share, so I want to pay]

“… You said your name was Raidou, right? You really are not fit to be a merchant”

"…"

Hearing the amazed tone of the representative, I reflexively gulp.

His usage of words gave a complete turn and I could tell that he is scoffing at me.

"Just now, you easily told me the existence of another circulation method which you were trying to hide at first. In other words, the trust in the first method you gave out has been damaged. No benefit in it, just loss. You asked if this could be solved with gold right? That was also an incredibly bad move. Listen well, you don't know the extent of the companies that have come to bring complains about you right? I did say this: 'they were from people connected to countries'. Meaning, they have considerable scale. Compared to the Kuzunoha Company, the magnitude is different. And against those people, you will resolve it with money? A company that has not been operating for even 1 year? It is like announcing that you have money that's doesn't fit the scale of your company. Your ability to decide and understand are also lacking. You, are you the representation of incompetence? You are just a brat that's lucky"

I was speechless.

Being told all that, I was simply surprised.

The atmosphere has also made a complete turn. The representative that has turned violent and offensive had an unpleasing smile in his face.

"What are you spacing out for? Even I can at least act to that extent. Do you think I would be able to survive in the business world if I were unable to? Seriously, I was wondering what kind of person it was because Rembrandt himself came to protect him, but here it is. How boorish. There's a limit to letdowns. About the circulation, it is okay to just tell me here, so explain it quickly. After that, it is okay to just go"

Explain… and leave?

This man, just how irritating can he become?

I can tell that my anger is leaking out.

“You can’t even contain your anger and bloodthirst? You are more childish than your appearance tells huh. Regarding faces, I can’t say much about others. Even so, I know how to act before others and I do so. You look incredibly unsightly so I will warn you. You have a face worse than me, so it is better for you to put more into your inside”

Even the exotic-looking representative talks about my outward appearance.

Just what part of you looks bad? You look plenty cool.

That slightly darkish skin looks appealing.

Now that I think about it, I feel like I have seen a similar person before.

Where was it?

No, right now that’s not the point.

Explain and leave. Moreover, I can just say it here?

His trust in me is low, so that’s just strange.

[What do you mean by leave?]

“Exactly as it means. You and the Kuzunoha Company are already done. So there’s no need to address you anymore”

[Done?]

“Its fine already, so just explain. With that, this ends”

[Can I hear the reason?]

“… Because you know, you are going to pay money right? Then I will just withdraw the comments of the other parties, that’s what I mean”

[Excuse me but, how much should I be paying?]

“There’s no need to prepare it right now”

[No need]

“Yeah. If you pay 90% of your sales, no one will complain. Kuzunoha Company will not become a threat in the future. The more it gains, the more they will benefit, so there’s no need to care about the circulation method. Even if it involves the demon race. If the people that had questions of your circulation method get money every month, they won’t criticize you much. The only one that would fall would be you. See? There’s nothing to lose”

[90% of our sales?!]

Moreover, every month?!

For how long would that continue anyways?

“You will pay right? Gold to the people that want to know about your circulation method. To multiple companies that gain several ten times more than you, maybe even the hundreds. There’s no way those guys would say they want a specific amount of gold. As long as they don’t know how much you have”

[How long would that last?]

“Until the Kuzunoha Company disappears”

[This is clearly an unreasonable demand. Is the Guild just going to consent that?]

“Unreasonable you say. You were the one that proposed to pay in gold right? Let me tell you this first, what I am saying right now is just a guess from me and it may not turn exactly as I say. Well, I don’t think it will be too far from what will happen though. Also, about the Guild consenting? That’s right. In the first place, not only consent, this is just a negotiation between merchants. When the weak ones get in the eyes of the strong ones, they get crushed. The Guild is not babysitting. We will help in the business, but the way to act is something you should learn”

[In that case, the people that want to make a new business would

not succeed]

“Thoroughly naïve. Ah right, your place is hiring a bunch of demi-humans right? In that case, how about just making your customers only them and stop doing your business in hyuman towns? Looking at your arguments, I feel like you are fit for that”

The representative admonishes me with eyes of pity.

It wasn’t sarcasm, he was really telling me to do that.

[You are not answering my question]

“As I said, the people that aim to be merchants should butter up to existing companies, learn the basics, create connections, be approved by the representative there, and then get a store eventually. I have money. I will do business. But if that’s how it worked, even the adventurers that earn small money can become merchants if they study a little. Those kind of people, they normally get crushed instantly. The power of adventurers can only be used in brawls. Just like you said, the guild punishes unjust deeds. Because I entered into a quarrel with another merchant, I used power to eliminate him and leave him half-dead. Killing would be, without a doubt, injustice. In the world of merchants, that is”

[You…]

“I have heard from Rembrandt, but it seems you have strong followers, and you yourself are reasonably strong right? You understand why you should not use that power in your business right? If you were to use that in this situation… it would make the Kuzunoha Company into allies of the demon race”

[This is stupid]

“No, you are just naïve. Return to Tsige, Raidou. It is too fast for you to be in this town. Redo your studies at your boss’ place. About the gold, I will stealthily put a part of Rotsgard as well, so be relieved”

[For someone that has been ridiculing me, you are being pretty cooperative]

“… Ri—diculing? The guy that’s taken a liking to you, for me, he is a tough enemy I have trouble dealing with. It would be advantageous for me if he were to misunderstand, and I get him to owe me one”

[Rembrandt-san]

“I heard that he had become docile, but to think that he has even made such a weakness. What a joke. But for you, it may be a lucky happening. Now then, it is most likely teleportation or something of the sort, so just talk about your circulation method”

Lucky.

Is he saying that by making Rembrandt-san disadvantaged, I earn safety?

I tell the representative that I have been using teleportation to come and go with goods. I hide the part about Asora and explain that I have a follower that has enough magic power to use long-distance teleportation.

And after that, I was released.

I have grown even more dejected after hearing the comments of the other companies from the representative of the guild.

Troubling Rembrandt-san.

I have made another lie in order to hide Asora.

I…

Just what is it that I should do?

I… have to consult with everyone.

While being self-aware that I am cornered, I slowly walk my way back.

Right now, I have no leeway to think about the team battles of my students.

Chapter 128: Tournament, first day of the team battles

Double chapter today!

The previous chapter left a bitter aftertaste, so I decided it was better to rinse it as soon as possible. So here it is!

Even the author admitted it was a bad move to release that kind of chapter after the hype chapter. He reflected on his actions -That's good to know-.

— Participants' waiting room

"Do you think… there will be rule changes?"

"There will. No doubt. If Hopelace doesn't do anything after yesterday's match, then that means he gave up, but that's definitely not gonna happen"

Daena answers Amelia as if saying to give up.

From the tenacity in the individual battles, he understood the adhesion of the interfering nobles.

It didn't show in Daena's tone, but the individual battles of him ended in disappointing results and he feels bad for his wife that came to spectate his matches.

She praised the contents of the match, but as a man, he wanted to move on a bit further.

Thinking about the Goddess' blessing included, in this world, the battle power of women's increases more than men.
But in this decades, the battle power from blessings couldn't be relied on, and in that meaning, the male side is stronger.

And then, in this tournament, having the Goddess' blessing is prohibited.

The Academy thought about the dangers of fighting in that kind of state. This has been a rule since the time the Goddess was still active.

"The team battles have less restrictions than the individual battles after all~. No matter which one of us that senpai fought with, the result would be obvious" (Yuno)

"Yuno, you can't go lowering your guard too much. Sensei will probably see through that" (Sif)

"Uh… I will be careful" (Yuno)

"Well, I do understand how Yuno feels. Champion-sama is in our team, and even the winner of the warrior category, Jin. The semifinals and finals are tomorrow, so today might actually be a boring one and no problem will happen" (Izumo)

Izumo cuts into the conversation of the Rembrandt sisters.

They haven't touched the topic of Izumo's grading, but it doesn't seem he is minding it much.

He looks relaxed.

"Sorry for the wait"

Jin and Misura return to the room that 5 people were having a friendly chat in.

"Welcome back. Did they tamper the rules?" (Amelia)

"Yeah, just like expected. But, something even bigger happened" (Jin)

"What?" (Amelia)

Seeing Jin's discouraged face, Amelia asks anxious.

“It seems… Sensei can’t come today” (Jin)

…

All the five faces changed.

Their emotions were varied, but the color of disappointment and despondency were the common points.

“What about Shiki-san?!” (Amelia)

The first one to react was Amelia.

She was completely putting Raidou as secondary.

“Shiki-san and those two aides, Tomoe-san and Mio-san, will be coming to spectate. Sensei himself won’t be able to come, but it seems there’s a message from him” (Jin)

“Why can’t he come?” (Sif)

The next one was Sif. Yuno and Izumo, all the other members also nod. Must be a question they all hold.

“It seems the Merchant Guild has called for him” (Jin)

“Oto-sama couldn’t do it…” (Sif)

“Looks like it. He was even called in this kind of day, so it is quite the problem. Even though I asked so many times to not cause problems for Raidou-sama…” (Yuno)

The eyes of the Rembrandt sisters had an ungentle light residing in them.

It disappeared in a few minutes, and Jin internally felt fear of them.

“Well, can’t be helped. And, what kind of changes did the rules have? Looking at Misura’s state, it seems to be quite severe” (Amelia)

As if saying: ‘if Shiki is coming then that’s fine’, Amelia asks about the rules.

Noticing that Misura's state was not like usual, she has prepared herself for the pestering to a certain extent.

"Ah, no… This one's like this because of another thing. About the team battle rules, there was only one point that was added. Honestly, it pissed me. That he thinks he will be able to defeat us with only that" (Jin)

Jin fearlessly laughs.

That smile was not towards the rules that were changed, but to the plotter that thinks he will be able to defeat them with something so shallow.

"Hmph~, don't beat around the bush and just tell us"

"Level restrictions to the whole party. The total should be within 365. If your number is over that, you have to adjust the party in order to enter that margin" (Jin)

"… So he is telling us to go with 3 people huh. Those numbers are like sniping us" (Amelia)

It was just as the bitter smiling Amelia said.

They registered as a party of 7 and it has been accepted, and yet, it has changed to only being able to participate with 3 in the scheduled day.

It couldn't be helped.

"And in truth, it is really a snipe. Because when adding the levels of Hopelace's party, it almost reaches that number. The only team that surpasses that number are us" (Jin)

"I am amazed. But just like Jin said, in terms of conditions, there's no problems for us. With only this much, nothing will change. We are stronger when teamed up after all. Why is Misura making such a cornered face then?" (Amelia)

"That is…" (Jin)

“… They told me… they would train me” (Misura)

Misura mutters with a pale face. This was a strange way of talking for him.

“By whom?” (Yuno)

Yuno urges him to be clearer. Because it didn’t sound like something to be so cornered about.

“… By the sensei’s close aide, the blue haired one. The one called Tomoe-san” (Misura)

“No way!!”

The voice of the Rembrandt sisters sync perfectly.

“That’s true. It seems she was impressed by his match with me, and after the school festival is over, she will have a bout with him while training him” (Jin)

“—Incredible!!”

“That Tomoe-san is. There’s been almost no adventurers that have caught the eye of Tomoe to the point that she would want to train that person. Misura-san, that’s amazing”

The surprise of the sisters was understandable.

Tomoe looks after the adventurers in Tsige sometimes, just like Mio, she practically has never taken a pupil or has taught anyone personally.

At most, there’s Lime who suddenly announced his retirement in the Adventurer Guild and seems to be personally adoring Tomoe, and also Mio, who has looked after one female adventurer with black hair.

“Well, it is supposed to be, but he was intimidated and is now completely scared” (Jin)

“If you were told that kind of thing, anyone would” (Misura)

“What did she tell you?” (Izumo)

Izumo probably found the scared Misura funny, he asks him with a smile on his face.

“… She placed a hand on my shoulder… and told me to please don’t die, with a straight face. I will hold-back, cause I don’t want to get scolded by Waka, she said” (Misura)

“Uwaa, she is practically not caring about you”

“See, see?! If a person with a crazy number like 1,500 says that to you, it is obvious that the color of your face would drain too, right?!” (Misura)

“Even if you die, Shiki-san will definitely bring you back. Well then, since Misura is not at his top condition, he will be in standby at the first match. Ah, Jin. Can we change members in this tournament?” (Amelia)

“Wa?! I can do it, I will do it! Yesterday I was totally unable to show off, so please don’t go excluding me!!” (Misura)

“… You are merciless Amelia. Changing is okay. Just that, if the team loses, even if you didn’t participate, everyone will be done for” (Jin)

“Instead of the match, it feels like choosing members will be more troublesome～. Well then, let’s decide quickly” (Yuno)

Placing their tension in a place completely different from the team battles, Jin and the others’ incandescent participation battle began.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

The princess of Gritonia, Lily, clicked her tongue internally.

She was looking at the team battles that were unfolding in front of her.

A match that is being held 3 versus 7.

Thinking about it normally, the 7 should be overpowering them. But the reality was the contrary. The 3 were playing around with the 7.

The hyuman's way of thinking is that a power fight from the front is the basic.
But the fighting of those three was different from the public recognized way of fighting.

Frankly speaking, it is a fighting that resembled the demon race. Using coordination, technique and strategy to overturn disadvantages.

Truly what the demon race has been doing when fighting against hyumans.

Lily who has been fighting with them for a long time could recognize that that is the fighting of the demons, or not.

That is the the weak ones use to fight against the strong ones.

Scheme, and fill up the difference with their own strength.

Hyumans don't know of it, or maybe they forgot this way of fighting a long time ago. But it's true that this method is really useful. It is also knowledge that the empire's army is trying to implement.

And they were able to splendidly utilize it, moreover, students that just with their own strength are able to overwhelm the opponent.

When she watched the individual battles, she could tell that they weren't normal. But, she didn't think that they were able to display such an ability in teamwork.

To the point that it made her think this will become even more one-sided than in the individual battles.

The ones fighting right now are, based on Lily's memory: the warrior category winner, Jin; the one who showed splendid spear-handling, Yuno Rembrandt; and the one who participated as a magician yesterday, Amelia Hopelace.

Today she is not holding a staff, but a bow.

If the hyumans possessed the same teamwork and strategy as demons, this would be the living representation of it.

For Lily, there is nothing that would make her happier than this. If they have strength in their side and they're able to have the same level of strategy as the demon race, they should be able to easily overpower them.

Normally, she would have tried to secure these splendid people without being reserved on the conditions.
But she can't.

They are kids that have been influenced by the tone of Raidou after all.

For Lily, there's nothing more irritating than that.

Even when they possess the specialized dragon summoner girl, they were simply overwhelmed. The Kuzunoha Company that Tomoe is in, is involved in this after all.

(It feels like I am seeing wooden dolls and scarecrows being beaten down for training…) (Lily)

It was already something that both sides could not call as a match.

Just like how Lily compared it with, it really did feel like they were watching a training where they continue hitting on a scarecrow.

The frontline quickly cuts in and destroys the stance of their opponent's vanguard, force them to protect their middle, and it even puts pressure in their rear lines.
In the opening that is created, a spear is added in, and in the formation that has crumbled promptly, use magic to shave it off.

Even when they try to counterattack, the rear guard students that were attacked by arrows and magic were unable to properly chant their arias or take stance.

Those 3 were clearly used to group battles. And they are completely

playing around.

No, in Lily's eyes it was as if they were trying to show off their moves to someone, and so they were thoroughly taking their time.

She could tell that probably, if they were in the mood to do so, the warrior category winner would be able to defeat everyone alone. But they didn't do that, and were utilizing teamwork to attack and pressure their opponent.

Not show, but showcasing.

Even the princess was able to tell their intentions.

Because of the fighting they chose, the fight that would only need a few minutes to finish off, was lengthened to around 5 minutes.

The result was obviously, total annihilation.

Unable to land even one effective attack, they were defeated.

The students of Raidou didn't even sweat.

The 3 went down the stage and gathered. All 7 were talking about something, and their figures as they returned even looked refreshing.

Why is it that, even when they are students, they are able to display so much skill in group battles?

How can they maintain that level of composed thought process when they are still students?

Lily mulled over it.

About how much of Tomoe's warning should she abide to.

She can tell that she is genuinely interested in them.

If she were to take an attitude that has nothing to do with Kuzunoha, maybe she can make contact with them.

Even so, she wanted to know.

The teaching method of Raidou.

The true ability of those students.

If Tomoki were here, she would have been able to use his eyes to attract them.

But if Raidou were to notice that, it is over. If Tomoe were to get wind of it, there's the danger of being done for.

When Lily looks at her surroundings, the King of Limia, the priestess faction of Lorel, the Church's Archbishop, the elite teachers that have been invited to the academy to commentate, and the heads of the Academy as well; were looking at the match as if eating into it, and also looking at the students.

It can be said that they are no longer nameless students.

The attention they gathered yesterday has soundly fixated itself today. And, in the people here, there's already some that have information of the Kuzunoha Company and Raidou.

Gritonia already has a trump card which is the hero.

After his meeting with Tomoe, it was as if he made a complete turnover. He endeavored in training and is increasing his strength.

He is plenty reliable, but Raidou and their students are also hard to give up on.

No matter how reliable he is, there's only one hero.

The flexible thought process that the hero has which differs from the hyuman's push through power thought process. In the future, there will be the need for more people with the same way of thinking.

Lily was looking at Jin and the others as quite the appealing talents.

(In that case, after expressing my gratitude, I will make contact with Raidou entirely regarding the students. I wonder if by doing so, I would still be able to maintain my promise with Tomoe.

Raidou. He is calling himself a merchant, but he has this much nurturing ability. I don't want Tomoe only, I want him as well. Giving him to another country would be too much of a waste) (Lily)

While the team battles continued, Lily's thoughts were exploring for a method to a favorable relationship with the Kuzunoha Company.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

"The world has what's called remarkable figures"

"Yes, father"

"When looking at Hibiki-dono, I sometimes think that way, but to think that I would be able to meet people like that in the traditional education emphasized Rotsgard, I didn't expect it at all"

"Currently, we have gathered as much of their personal information as we could"

The first day of the team battles has ended.

The four remaining teams were introduced and the event ended for the day, but in the conversation of the second prince that accompanies the Limia King, he was only talking about one team.

Even though there's also a team with the second son of Hopelace which comes from Limia Kingdom.

"Umu… I do admit their competency… but what we truly have to look at is not them, but at the teacher that taught them that way of fighting" (King)

"What do you mean? Yesterday, we began the investigation of the classes they take and the ones they have in common. Also… for some reason, there was already a teacher that Hopelace household has investigated, so I have also included that person as well in the documents" (Prince)

"N? The Hopelace household? I knew that he was doing something in the background with the Academy, but to think it had to do with that teacher. My intuition was lacking. That group of kids are

without doubt students overflowing with wisdom, but this time, I think that the core of the surprise should be the one who has taught them this path" (King)

"You are saying… there is someone that is producing remarkable figures?" (Prince)

The prince slightly knits his brows at the foresight of the king and asks him the meaning.

The prince was also surprised by their orderly way of fighting as if he was watching their own country's hero.

But, if there's a teacher who is 'teaching' them and creating this kind of students, the first one they have to make contact with is, without doubt, that teacher.

Even if the Limia Kingdom is unable to secure those students that are still in their teens, it is fine if they are able to obtain that teacher.

"Looking at the state of Hopelace's second son, there's the chance that he has done something bad" (King)

"With that much ability, I thought it wouldn't be strange to balance it. But in the team battles, the rule that was added seemed as if it was sniping at them" (Prince)

"Even if we try to restrain him now, it might be too late already, but restrict the head of the family from interfering anymore. Also… do you know the name of that teacher?" (King)

"Understood. It is a class that the 7 of them have in common, and it is also a teacher that Ilumgand-dono has taken interest in, Raidou. He is also the representative of a recently made company, Kuzunoha" (Prince)

"Raidou… Kuzunoha Company's Raidou huh. Do you think you can schedule a meeting with him?" (King)

"I will try to. But, there's still one question remaining" (Prince)

“What?” (King)

The prince’s expression changes into a gloom one, and after saying Raidou’s name, he turns to the king and talks as if questioning.

But the king in question didn’t mind that attitude and just urges him to continue.

“It’s about the Hopelace’s second son, Ilumgand-dono. From what I remember, before Hibiki-dono came to our country, he already held doubts in our country’s nobles, and when he met Hibiki-dono and exchanged words, he admired her ideology. He even turned his treatment of just being a spare of the next head, the eldest son Woken-dono, and vigorously polished his abilities in the academy. Why is that kind of person doing deeds that are synonym to our country’s corrupt nobles?” (Prince)

“… That’s, I don’t know either. If Woken, who is in the frontlines, were to die, Ilumgand would succeed him. I was expecting as much from him as I was from Hibiki-dono” (King)

The attitude and way of acting of Ilumgand towards Raidou and also Jin and the others was practically as if he were a completely different person, is what the king and prince wondered about.

“Was he indoctrinated by those merchants and have taught him those kind of ways? Or did he drown in his political power? Whichever it is, it will disappoint Hibiki-dono” (King)

“Should I investigate?” (Prince)

“No. That’s something the Hopelace should do. There’s no guarantee they will tell us everything anyways. Put the Kuzunoha Company as priority. Well, we will be moving after we drop Stella Fort though” (King)

“… Finally, huh” (Prince)

“The motivation of Hibiki-dono felt stronger than ever before. Her secret stay in Tsige has made her grow greatly, and she has also obtained reliable companions” (King)

“Adventurers. Their disposition was clearly different from those of the kingdom. In time, I am thinking about giving Hibiki-dono independent authority to a unit of her direct supervision” (Prince)

“That’s good” (King)

Limia’s King looks at the far future.

The hero that has descended to the kingdom, Otonashi Hibiki, has given the kingdom many changes. In times, Hibiki voices out things that question monarchy, and between the Limia nobles, there’s rumors going around about the possible discord between her and the king.
And in the big nobles, there are many who think of her ideologies as dangerous.

In truth, the king publicly shows as if he is against that change, but internally, he is accepting it.

That’s why he has cooperated in several ways to benefit Hibiki.

That she was able to head to Tsige and the adventurers she brought from Tsige were smoothly accepted, was heavily influenced by the cooperation of the king.

And the one who’s serving as the point of contact is the second prince.

The king tells his intentions to the prince and the prince transmits it to Hibiki. Their relationship is favorable.

“Gritonia’s Lily, the priestess of Lorel, the border of the world that spread beginning from Aion, the Adventurer Guild that continues protecting neutrality… We need Hibiki-dono to concentrate just on her duty of fighting against the demon race, but it is hard” (King)

“Defeating the demon race won’t make the world peaceful instantly after all. That person also seemed to understand that” (Prince)

“But there’s nothing wrong in reducing that sadness. Joshua, this may be troublesome, but I am counting on you” (King)

“Yes, your wish is my command, father” (Prince)

The second prince of Limia kingdom, Joshua, makes a gentle smile as he accepts the king’s words.

Kuzunoha Company.

They have also arrived at that name.

Chapter 129: Kuzunoha's meeting

In the time when Princess Lily was troubled in stepping to action regarding Jin and the others…

At a section of the audience, two girls wearing clothes that remarkably stand out were sighing.

Raidou- Makoto's followers, Tomoe and Mio.

The other follower, Shiki, was babysitting the students, so he was doing separate actions.

"How boring~. When there's this much difference in power, it isn't a fight but a show-ja na" (Tomoe)

"That's why I was saying so since yesterday, wasn't I? If they were not Waka-sama's students, I wouldn't even be here watching-desu wa" (Mio)

"If they were our students like with Shiki, we would be able to enjoy it in a different way but… Mio, what is that bizarre inflated bag-ja?" (Tomoe)

"What you ask, it is the specialty products of booths here and there-desu wa" (Mio)

"It is an answer, and yet it isn't. No, what I am asking is about the amount-ja yo" (Tomoe)

At the side of Tomoe there's Mio and further after, there's several big light brown paper bags. Seeing that, she asks with enmity.

Mio's answer was nonchalant, and she tells her that it is all food.

But what Tomoe wanted to know, is just as she said, the amount of

it.

In the seats that are supposed to be fully occupied, one of them is being totally occupied.

To protect her honor, Mio explains that this is originally the seat of Makoto and because he can't come, she is just utilizing it in an effective way.

In no way did she put all that food because she doesn't want anyone else to come sit there.

"I will eat it all by the time we return, so don't mind it. If you want me to share some with you, just say it honestly okay?" (Mio)

"I don't need any. I feel like it might give me a heartburn" (Tomoe)

"Hmph, if this were alcohol, you would take it without doubt" (Mio)

The two of them leisurely watch the team battles unfolding in the stage while doing trivial talk.

There were no matches that were worth watching, and even in the matches with Jin and the others, the opponent was so weak it wasn't fun.

Moreover, their master Makoto was not there.

Watching those matches earnestly might be something hard to do for these two girls.

"At this rate, I can't expect much from tomorrow's semifinal and finals. Well, we will be able to sit along with Waka, so that's fine" (Tomoe)

"Same-desu wa. If I am together with Waka-sama, the place doesn't matter" (Mio)

"Fumu, it seems it is done already-ja na. Mu" (Tomoe)

…

Tomoe and Mio notice something at the same time.

“Mio, Waka is calling-ja. We are going back” (Tomoe)

“I know already-desu wa. It seems he is slightly dispirited, so let’s hurry” (Mio)

Receiving a thought transmission from their master, Tomoe and Mio both nod and get up from their sits.

A short and straightforward thought transmission.

‘I have something I want to consult about, so I want you to return to the company’, is what he said.

A tone with no vigor.

While holding worry in their chest, they meet up with Shiki and return to the company.

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“For the time being, it is fine to kill that representative-desu wa ne?” (Mio)

“Mio, the talk has not finished yet. Calm down first” (Tomoe)

“What stupid thing are you saying? I am completely calm-desu wa. Can’t you see that I clearly understand what I should do?” (Mio)

“That’s why I am telling you to wait for now. The talk has not finished yet-ja. Wait for a bit” (Tomoe)

“Such abusive language towards Waka-sama… abusive language… it wasn’t such a lukewarm level-desu wa ne? How should I kill him?” (Mio)

“Mio. I am telling you to hear what that very Waka has to say until the end-ja” (Tomoe)

After I finished telling the outline of what happened, Mio stood up and tried to leave the room.

I didn't have the vitality to stop her immediately, so Tomoe took my place and inhibited Mio.

Even I could tell that Tomoe was looking at me with fainthearted eyes.

N?

Inhibited was it?

I feel like she didn't stop her…

"As I thought, one of us should have gone as well"

It's Shiki.

In terms of result, it is just as he said.

It might have been better if I had one of them accompany me.

If I had one of my followers with me, I felt like they would resolve it with strength. I thought that if that happened, then it would be pointless.

The first time Rembrandt-san met Tomoe, he was left completely speechless and was pretty withered.

I wanted to know the extent of the ill will the other merchants held towards me.

In the past, when I met Rembrandt-san the first time to give him the Ruby-eye's eyes, it went well, so I thought maybe I would be able to hold my conversation if the other party was a merchant.

The context matched when I associated with Rembrandt-san, so even with the matter of Tomoe's level, I think I would have been able to manage it properly. But this time, the representative was someone I had no connection with.

I didn't want to prepare something like intimidation in our first meeting.

That naïve way of thinking led to this.

I was pushed into an unreasonable situation, made a fool of, and returned like a loser.

“Sorry for saying something like wanting to go alone” (Makoto)

“If one of us were with you, there’s the chance that place would have turned into a sea of blood, so not everything is bad. Don’t mind it that much” (Tomoe)

“Waka-sama is not in the wrong!” (Mio)

Tomoe tries to comfort me and Mio interposes with a rebuttal.

No, no matter how you think about it, the way I dealt with it was bad.

“Now that I think about it, not a single one of us has knowledge in business. We all began as novices. There might have been more ways to deal with it if we were introduced by Rembrandt-shi and taught the basics” (Shiki)

Not might. That’s what we should have done.

Before that, there’s the problem that even when I myself began a company just recently, I still went and did things here and there, neglecting the business.

And in truth, the company still did well.

No, that’s how it looked.

That’s why it brought upon more negligence.

It may be this late of a time to do so, but I have to reflect on it.

“Shiki, even you! Why does Waka-sama have to feel down?! In the first place, Waka-sama was displeased by the shortage of medicines that can’t reach the hands of the people and were easily losing their life, so he aspired to spread medicines, right?! Why does he have to learn how to act around those merchants to not be resented?! He is

doing something that's good for everyone, and yet, why?! Isn't this ridiculous?!" (Mio)

The words of Mio that were trying to cover for me no matter what, were grinding at my heart.

That's right.

I wanted to sell medicine in order for everyone to have an easy way of reaching out to it.

For that reason, I wanted to do business widely without minding which country it was.

Because of circumstances, we also handle various miscellaneous goods as well, but those are just extras.

Doing something good.

Because I had that thinking in a part of me, maybe that's why I only looked at the people I was selling to.

Not doing anything excessive with the price because of people of the same trade, the counter-plans I did for the copies and resale; those were the only things I thought of.

And in truth, even the price might be questionable. We collected everything ourselves, had the people needed for the compounding, and left it to a point where we would barely escape deficit.

That is… within the range?

That's probably not it.

Since the time the people made a rude comment of my demi-human employees, I haven't gone to the meetings of the merchants in the area.

Lately, Akua, Eris and the eldwa craftsmen have grown more accustomed to socializing with hyumans. But, even so, it was most likely an error to not relate with the merchants around.

Ignoring association must have made the impression of Kuzunoha Company even more ominous.

Even if I have good intentions, a business is a business.

There will obviously be competition.

There will be people who would want to eliminate the ones who have the same target of customers, and if you do something that stands out, the big companies will place an eye on you.

I didn't make a method to cope with it when something like that happened, and have continued until this day.

As expected, I can't order to eliminate them just because they have kept an eye on us after all.

In Tsige it was different, but in Rotsgard I don't have any backing.

In other words, I was defenseless.

"Mio, that's just idealistic talk. It isn't just distributing. As long as we are doing a business, these kind of things happen. I won't say Waka has done nothing wrong, but I have to admit we were somewhat defenseless" (Tomoe)

"… I hold the same opinion. Of course, it is true that I should have acted in a better way. I have no excuse" (Shiki)

"!!! There's something wrong with you guys! Even though Waka-sama is the absolute rule! The stupid ones are the merchants that are only looking at the near future!" (Mio)

Mio would most likely stand by my side no matter what happens.

Even if I were to turn into a fiend, even if I were to become the enemy of the whole world, she would still be willing to fall to the same place as I am.

That's why I have to put myself together.

If she falls so far, that's all my responsibility.

As if persuading myself, I try to kill the unfair anger that's inside me.

At the very least, I don't think this is something that is fine to solve with just violence.

The existence of Mio who is willing to give her everything for me, prevented my current unstable emotions from rampaging.

"… Waka. That representative said things that are difficult to forgive, but he also said good things. How about it? I think that since we have the chance, there's also the option of giving up on hyumans and opening a store in the villages of demi-humans" (Tomoe)

"Serving only demi-humans?" (Makoto)

"Yes. If you wish to, we can also serve demonic beasts and mamonos. Also, Waka told me, that you wanted the four seasons. I don't think Waka likes conflict, so you probably intent to have a relationship with the demon race in order to secure that place right? Then, I think it should be fine to do business with them. Continuing business in the hyuman society and having our hearts crushed, it would only create more weight in Waka, and I don't think that's a good idea" (Tomoe)

"The demon race publicly hates hyumans, but they are generous towards other races. I think the proposal of Tomoe-dono is worth considering" (Shiki)

"I… don't understand complicated stuff. But I don't think there's a need for Waka-sama to be under people that just want to take advantage of Waka-sama's kindness" (Mio)

…

Kindness huh.

Maybe I was looking at it that way in some part of me.

And, maybe the people around saw it that way as well.

“I…” (Makoto)

“Waka, please tell us what you are currently thinking. If Waka so wishes, we will fight with whoever. Also… we will lower our heads to whoever you wish us to” (Tomoe)

Mio and Shiki nod at Tomoe’s words.

Right. There’s no need to hide anything from them.

They are my family in this world after all.

“… Just like I promised to Tomoe, I plan on having a connection with the demon race. After a conversation with one of the demon generals, I promised a meeting with the Demon Lord. It will be after the school festival is over, but I intent to meet with the Demon Lord and ask it to let me take over or borrow one location where Tomoe says the four seasons are in” (Makoto)

I resolve myself and tell the three what I was thinking.

Tomoe nods with a joyful look and glittering eyes.

Shiki looks like he consents. He silently nods with his eyes closed.

Mio simply accepted my words and was smiling.

“If that happens, it will create a big debt towards the demon race. Talking to the demon lord. I can’t say anything definite, but I don’t think it will end in a simple manner. Will the hegemony of this world continue in the hands of the Goddess and hyumans, or will it be plundered by the demon race? We might even have to participate in that conflict. If I had to speak my ideal scenario, it may be naïve, but it would be to hold a connection with the demon race while continuing business with the hyumans. But depending on the situation, I don’t know what would happen” (Makoto)

I bring a world map from the shelf and spread it on the desk. And then, I place a hand on the location Tomoe pointed out before.

“This was the place right, Tomoe?” (Makoto)

“Yes. That’s the place” (Tomoe)

“The previously associated country of Elysion, Kaleneon. The place is around Yamagata prefecture and Tsukiyama huh” (Makoto)

The place that will provide Asora with the four seasons.

And also the place that is deeply connected with the two hyumans I met.

“Yamagata?” (Tomoe)

“Nothing. Just pointless rambling. What’s important is what I said before that. It’s a country named Kaleneon. That place… seems to be the native country of my parents” (Makoto)

“?!”

“My parents met there, and after that, they became adventurers, traveled, and transferred to my world. In other words, to me, it is also my home in a sense. Of course, that has nothing to do with the four seasons, so it is fine to ignore that point for now” (Makoto)

I have no emotional attachment at all anyways.

If possible, I would be happy to obtain even a little bit of information of my parents, but it is a country that has fallen to ruin.

The demon race probably knows more information of Kaleneon.

If they didn’t turn everything into ash when they invaded that is.

“But Waka-sama, if I remember correctly, Kaleneon is the place the librarian Eva and Gotetsu’s Ruria…” (Shiki)

As if remembering something, Shiki says the name of the Ansland sisters.

“That’s right. The birthplace of those girls. That’s why I had each of them decide something. If both of them accept, I…” (Makoto)

I tell the three of them what I was thinking.

That's my last resort.

It may be a foolish thought that can't even be called resort though.

But…

"Fu… fufufu. Isn't that interesting, Waka?" (Tomoe)

"Right. Depending on how it is done, it might even become a card to solve our current problem" (Shiki)

"If it's something Waka-sama has decided, I don't have any objections. Also, I think it is stupid to not use the strength we have and just worry" (Mio)

My family accepted it.

In that case, as Kuzunoha Company's Raidou, and also, as the third one to descend to this world…

Well, the two heroes are in the hyuman side, so it should be fine for one to be behind-the-scenes on the demon race side right, bug Goddess?

Chapter 130: A certain student's background (Upper) ~Reunion~

He is one of the students learning in Rotsgard.

But he is not a simple student.

A big noble that everyone in Limia recognizes, Hopelace's second son.

On top of that, he excels in literary and military arts, and has a strong sense of justice. Truly a thoroughbred.

Because the eldest son has to follow his career, he is participating in the demon race fight at the frontlines, and the second son knows of the danger the eldest son is facing, so he took the elite education of the Academy.

In other words, in case something happens, he will be treated as a spare, an insurance.

But that's not something strange in the household of nobles, and Ilumgand Hopelace understands this reality and accepts it.

Then, is he an obedient second son towards the head of the family? The answer is no.

Ilumgand disagreed with the decay of the nobles in Limia, and can even be considered hate. Even so, he obediently followed the idea of his father because he has to act the submissive child.

Hidden inside him is his wish for the reform of the nobles.

The responsibility of the people in higher class.

That's the ideal of Ilumgand.

Since he was born as a noble, he will live a life that doesn't shame that blood, protect the weak ones, become their sword and shield.

He will swear genuine loyalty to the king, and consequently, be given a land to manage.

He holds a conviction and wants to build up a righteous government, that's why the people that live in their territory adore the nobles that work as their feudal lord.

He wasn't great because he was a chosen one since birth.

In the nobles of Limia, this is a really unusual ideology.

The ones who bestowed him this way of thinking were two.

The first one is a girl of a household they were friends with.

When he voiced out his childish ideals, she affirmed those with a broad smile and applauded him.

The words that were more of a cool front and for show, at that moment, had turned into a dream for Ilumgand. The sound of the applause at that time and her smile, for him, it was a more solemn memory than the blessing of the Goddess, and has remained in him vividly.

The other one was the female hero that recently descended to this world.

The hero that suddenly descended one day.

She said things that were not chained by the noble doctrine and the monarchy. Words filled with freedom.

She steadily learned to mind her words, but it isn't like the foundation of her ideology has changed.

For many nobles, that opinion of hers is dangerous, but Ilumgand felt that she would be able to provide the marrows of his vague and

overly large dream and ideal. He was strongly conscious of his dreams and reform plans. And it was when he met the hero that this dream began to take definite form.

That's why he secretly went to hear the talks of the hero that had ordered him to not involve himself with his father more than necessary.

At times, he also cooperated with her in an extent that allows him to.

The growth of the hero, Otonashi Hibiki, was tremendous, and easily left Ilumgand in the dust, but he didn't even feel jealousy towards that otherworldly growth of hers.

So instead of lending his skills to her, he mostly provided her information or helped out in the financing area.

"When you graduate, let's fight together"

One day, he finally received an earnest petition from Hibiki.

In honesty, he wanted to be her strength even if he had to leave the academy. And he wanted her to tell him more about those ideologies.

Ilumgand heard that she was around his age, but he felt like Hibiki was somewhat mature. Maybe because the words of Hibiki were something he is aiming for, and her thinking was several steps into the future.

But Ilumgand Hopelace considered his household's intentions, and decided to attend the academy until graduation.

The war with the demon race is in a scale that will not be finished until several years later, so if he ever gets into a position where he will succeed the Hopelace household, it would be convenient for the reform of the nobles.

For the sake of cooperating with Hibiki as well, he couldn't waste the opportunity of learning in the academy and the connections he could obtain in it.

When thinking back at it, this was when he diverged.

—

In the spring of that land.

At a holiday in academy town, he reunites with a certain girl.

Both of them have changed quite a lot in appearance. But because of the characteristic accessory, Ilumgand was able to tell that it was her.

A black choker that has a bell and ribbon.

The young her and the current her had the same accessory but the atmosphere that's given out was obviously different. He was able to accurately connect the person in his memories and the one in front of him as the same person.

"Ruria? Are you Ruria Ansland?"

With a spaced-out voice, Ilumgand reflexively calls out the girl that was about to pass beside him.

It was the name of an incredibly unexpected person.

For him it was unforgettable, but it is the name of a girl that he was supposed to never meet again.

"…"

Being called by her name, the girl turns around.

The girl, who was wearing waitress clothes, judged that the owner of the voice was Ilum who's walking around town with his friends, and looks at him.

It's a girl that had cold eyes and felt as if she had no ambition.

The bell of the choker didn't ring, and showed that it is just a simple decoration.

"Why are you…?"

“Who are you? Have we met before?” (Ruria)

“It’s me! Ilumgand! Limia’s, the Hopelace household’s! Haven’t we met several times at Kaleneon, in the Ansland territory? You don’t… remember?”

“!!”

Not the words Ilumgand, nor Hopelace; the girl called Ruria reacted to the word Kaleneon and stiffened.

“I remember. We played in the flower beds of Agarest. Oi Ruria, what is it?! Why are you trying to leave?!”

“I-I don’t remember student-sama well. Excuse me!!” (Ruria)

“Wait!”

Ilumgand grabs Ruria’s hand, and restrains the movements of the girl that was trying to leave.

At that moment, her body trembled greatly and looks at the arm of her that was grabbed, with fear in her eyes.

One of the persons accompanying Ilumgand made a gesture as if thinking about the name of Kaleneon.

“Uhm, Ilum-san. When you said Kaleneon, you mean the country that was around Elysion and collapsed in the early stages of the demon race invasion, right? The name of that place came out in a previous class”

“Y-Yeah, that’s right. She is a noble that prospered in that Kaleneon. Ansland household’s daughter”

“Isn’t that strange? If I remember correctly, that country was destroyed immediately in the momentum of the demon race invasion. In that case, a noble that was prospering in that land should have fallen as well…”

“Hey!”

The words that could be taken as insensitive were remonstrated by Ilumgand.

The question he held was pretty natural, but Ilumgand who was practically sure the girl in front of him was an acquaintance of him, thought about the emotions of Ruria and stopped him from continuing what he was going to say.

“Ah, sorry. No well, you must have confused me with someone similar” (Ruria)

“You should be Ruria. That choker that is around your neck, and the bell that doesn’t ring. If I remember correctly, she also wore the same thing. Also, you certainly reacted to what I said. You are… Ruria, right?”

Ilumgand uses an insecure tone that’s not normal of him.

Excelling in literary and military arts, he already overflows with self-confidence, and yet, this is the first time the companions around him have seen him bewildered.

Kaleneon is one of the countries that has been destroyed completely by the demon race.

The chances that one of the nobles from there, Ruria, has survived, were so low that it made Ilumgand lose his confidence.

“… Yes. I am indeed Ruria. I don’t remember my childhood that much, but it is probably not wrong that I have met you before” (Ruria)

In time, because of the unwavering gaze of Ilumgand, Ruria admits it as if giving up.

That she is a noble from a ruined country.

And in truth, it wasn’t as if Ruria was feigning ignorance.

Ruria and her sister Eva escaped from the fires of war by the hands of their parents, and have received a terrible treatment because of it.

That's why she has been subconsciously forgetting the memories of her childhood, and in reality, she practically doesn't remember anything of her life in the Ansland territory.

It is true that she got scared of the keyword Kaleneon and tried to leave because of her feelings of not wanting to get involved though.

"Sorry but, can you please release me already? It hurts" (Ruria)

Pointing out the hand that was being grabbed to the point of hurting, Ruria asks him.

"… Sorry"

"Don't mind it" (Ruria)

The two who were unable to properly connect words.

It is a conversation of a person that wants to leave as soon as possible, that is troubled about how to cut it off, so it is obvious it would turn out this way though.

"Ruria, why are you in this town? You, your country should have fallen in the fight with the demon race"

Ilumgand's words were slightly different from how he truly felt and were released onto Ruria.

In truth, he wanted to be happy about Ruria's safety and wanted to embrace those feelings.

For him, Ruria is, without doubt, his first love. Moreover, she is the girl that has given him a beautiful memory that is coated with dreams and ideals.

But because he is together with his companions, he held back from doing it.

What came out in exchange was the way nobles should act that has always been lying in his heart and the inconsistency of Ruria's safety.

“I was… led to escape. By my parents” (Ruria)

“!!!”

The words of Ruria gave a big shock not only to Ilumgand, but to his companions as well.

In the first place, the faint first love of Ilumgand was what created his current ideals.

For him, Ruria is the partner that he pledged that ideal with. And she was supposed to have sacrificed herself as a noble to protect the people.

That’s how deep she was edged in his heart.

But the reality was that she is still alive, moreover, she abandoned her people and escaped.

An intense conflict occurs inside Ilumgand. Several emotions were born, clashed, and bounced off.

What could he say? He couldn’t collect himself.

‘What happened to the pledge of that time?’

‘If she is alive, that in itself makes me happy’

‘For a noble to survive is an embarrassment’

‘It must have been harsh to lose your parents’

‘The hero-sama is right now in the vanguard and protecting the people from the demon race’s deadly grasp, fighting with all they have, and yet…’

‘It is fine. From now on, I will be here for you’

Those kind of contradicting emotions and words were clashing

inside Ilumgand.

“… You abandoned your country and people, and escaped?”

One of his companions spitted out words to Ruria with eyes of scorn.

“You are the worst. If you are a noble, you should be the first one to clash swords with the enemy to protect the people”

“You even fell to the point of being a waitress to protect your life? Know shame”

The first words served as a spark and more words of disdain were spitted out towards Ruria.

They were cruel words.

But a part of Ilumgand also felt this way. Even if it’s not completely.

That’s why he was unable to hamper the words of his companions.

Ruria made a face as if she had given up, as if saying ‘just say whatever you want’.

There was no objection.

Seeing her like that, Ilumgand was unable to hold back his emotions.

“… An embarrassment of hyumans. Ansland and you. Even though we are learning at the academy every day to defeat the demon race. Just like everyone said, for a noble to fall into the streets just to survive, that’s only an embarrassment!”

“… Even though you have never experienced the possibility of dying. You don’t even know how I have lived until now, so please don’t go talking as if you know” (Ruria)

Hearing the words of Ilumgand, Ruria’s brows slightly trembled and she refuted.

A small and weak tone.

But without pausing, she was able to say it until the end.

It isn't like she was just allowed to escape and has lived an easy life.

She has taken the job of being a waitress in this town, and before obtaining her current life , she has received severe treatment and has been suffering. Even in her current life she has been chased by the ghost of her past, and she isn't sure of how long she can continue like this.

Saying all those things when living in a prosperous environment and passing their days in the academy with no inconveniences, she probably couldn't stop herself from voicing out her feelings.

"What?!"

"A traitorous and cowardly noble is insulting us?!"

"Like hell I would run away from a fight and cling to my life like you!"

"I have the resolve to die uprightly!"

"People that say such high and mighty words only know how to persecute the weak ones, you know? You are in such a disjointed place from the fight and comfortably studying. Do you think you can do something like war?" (Ruria)

"Shut up!"

The companions of Ilumgand couldn't take Ruria's rebuttals anymore and they pushed her shoulder.

Ruria staggers and steps back. But the heat in her eyes didn't back off and were simply looking at them.

"Ruria… you, just how far will you… Even so…"

"Hey, say something!"

While Ilumgand was surprised by Ruria's change, her existence was stirring up inside his heart.

His first love.

She is alive.

The girl that was supposed to share the same ideals as him, has fallen and lived a life of disgrace.

At any rate, he couldn't maintain his composure.

'I have to say something', and the moment he was about to open his mouth.

"Ah, can you leave it at that?"

A group of two cut in between them.

Both of them were dressed like magicians.

But what stood out was the face of the small height man.

He had quite the ugly face.

By the standards of the hyumans in this world, there's no doubt it is at the lowest.

A beast-type demi-human. Right, an appearance that would fit that of a monkey demi-human.

But he is probably scraping the line between both. This was the first time he held a rude impression of someone since coming to the academy.

Right now that's not the problem though.

"… Who are you guys?"

"Oioi, can't you see these clothes? Are you guys stupid?"

One of the companions pointed out the Rotsgard Academy's uniform, and tried to drive away the two.

Without being able to switch his emotions of just now, he talks to the two who look like they are not related to the academy, with a severe attitude.

That's not how he should act, this is not the way a hyuman who is supposed to stand on top should be acting. Ilumgand also understands this.

But right now, his head is still completely filled with Ruria.

'At any rate, I want to talk with her, just the two of us'

That's what he thought.

But…

Those two, Raidou and Shiki, interfered with Ilumgand's wish completely, and will become a big wall in his way.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

Overwhelming power.

That's the strength Raidou and Shiki showed.

For Ilumgand, that was a memory that remained vividly.

He was somehow able to locate the place Ruria was working in.

Gotetsu, a restaurant that also doubles as a bar.

But since the time Raidou and his follower Shiki defeated them, every time he tried to meet Ruria, they would get in the way.

Accurately speaking, the Kuzunoha Company got in the way.

He didn't meet Raidou himself, but every time he tried to meet with Ruria, an employee of that company would obstruct him.

In times, with schemes.

In times, with power.

It was humiliating.

The impatience in Ilumgand's heart piles up.

The words he said in their reunion might have been too much, is what he thought.

'That's why I will meet her again and apologize'

Anyways, he wanted to clear the misunderstanding.

After all, there's no doubt that he is happy that she was alive.

But he was unable to fulfill that at all.

Receiving money from his household, he requested assistance and hired people, but that didn't work either.

'No matter what regret I have, you will get in the way huh'

The anger of Ilumgand towards the Kuzunoha Company slowly changed into hatred.

Actually, in this matter, Shiki and Raidou had no part in it.

When the employees of Kuzunoha Company went to Gotetsu to have a meal, Ruria indirectly told them that Ilumgand has been following her around and asked them to please check him out.

Lime Latte was the first one. Then the Forest Onis, Akua and Eris, and also the Elder dwarf.

They worried about Ruria, and while being ordered by Raidou to protect Ruria from a different matter, they also obstructed Ilumgand and anyone related to him from getting close to Ruria.

Ilumgand didn't know of that.

That's why the Kuzunoha Company and Raidou became targets of his hatred with no distinction.

"Ilumgand Hopelace-sama, right?"

“Who are you?”

“Don’t you want power? From what I have heard, things have not been going well for you”

At that time, an unknown student talked to Ilumgand.

Ilumgand’s words were mixed with caution.

To begin with, the Rotsgard Academy is immense.

There are many students he doesn’t know.

It isn’t strange to have a student he hasn’t seen before talk to him.

Just that, Ilumgand was cautious because he was called out when he was alone and in a place where there were few people around.

“Power? Are you saying that knowing my strength?”

“Of course. Your strength and also your heart that wishes for more power”

“?!!”

“This may be rude of me, but at the current rate, it is questionable if you will be able to help the hero-sama. Someone that’s not even able to deal with one hindrance. That’s what you are thinking right?”

“You, who are you?!”

“Your ally. I have something that’s being developed in the academy. A magic medication that will raise your physical and magical power. A groundbreaking creation. When testing it in a common student, it was confirmed to show a certain extent of effectiveness. It should be a student you already know of, Ilumgand-sama”

Several names of students Ilumgand knew were mentioned.

Students that showed growth to the point of being abnormal.

The heart of Ilumgand wavers.

“There’s no secondary effects, and it is also an article that’s approved by the academy, so any inspections won’t bring out problems. After confirming how much effect it has on someone as excelling as Ilumgand, the academy plans on spreading it. How about it? It may be a rude way of saying it, but will you cooperate as a sample?”

“The academy approves of it… Medicine that will make me stronger”

“Yes. You will obtain the power to make your wishes come true”

“… Got it. I will cooperate. Do you have any conditions?”

“It is fine to just report the progress to my superiors and the people in duty”

Taking out a bottle with pills in it, the student holds it with its thumb and index finger, and presents it to Ilumgand.

Hopelace’s second son extends his right hand and opens his palm.

“Please drink one every day. There’s no problem in consuming more, but there’s no effect either, so please do hold back from doing so. If you tell a superior before you finish it, I will bring more”

Ilumgand looks at the bottle that he received, and the student tells him a simple advice.

After looking at it for a while, Ilumgand raises his head again, but that student had already left.

Chapter 131: A certain student's background (Lower) ~Undercover actions~

Raidou was appointed as a teacher in the Academy.

Moreover, he has obtained popularity in one portion of the students.

Ilumgand has been ingesting the medicine that the student gave him before.

From what he could tell, there were no secondary effects, just like that person said. His physical strength and magic power became stronger.

That strengthening is continuing even now.

The strengthened power increased his leveling speed, and his level reached 70.

"Raidou. That guy is even moving around the academy!"

But the irritation of Ilumgand didn't stop.

It was a simple matter.

Even when he obtained power, Ilumgand has been unable to meet with Ruria.

Not only that, he has received reports several times of Raidou and Shiki going to Gotetsu and conversing with Ruria in a friendly manner.

There's no way that's amusing for him.

The one there is not supposed to be Raidou, but him, Ilumgand.

The being that has stolen the place he was supposed to enter and the smile he was supposed to receive.

Inside of him, Raidou had become an existence that was worthy of being killed.

Moreover, he lost to a student that is taking the classes of Raidou.

Ilumgand put pressure in the people and stopped the attendance applications to Raidou's class.

And yet, even with him placing pressure, that student was one of the scholarship students that still send the petition to Raidou's class.

A defeat is not something that's okay to happen.

Moreover, that student said this when Ilumgand was defeated.

"Ah, damn. I messed up adjusting my power"

She whispered that and returned to the line of students.

It wasn't like she said it for Ilumgand to hear, it was more like, her monologue leaked out.

Her name is Amelia Hopelace.

A scholarship students that originated from Gritonia.

Hopelace.

Same family name as Ilumgand.

But it is a female student that has no connection with him at all.

At least he doesn't know of any connection with her.

Amelia has not talked to him in any way, so he thought that it is probably a coincidental match.

And in reality, Amelia is not even from a noble origin, and

Ilumgand had already lost interest in her name.

“Held back? Went easy, on me?”

What was important wasn’t the name, but the fact that she went easy on him.

Her year was lower, her level was lower, moreover, in a state where there’s no blessing, a girl went against an upper-grade top class and won.

There’s no way he could accept that.

“You are Raidou’s! That Raidou’s student right?! Don’t mess around! Don’t mess with me!!!”

Little by little, unconsciously, he lost his ability to control his emotions.

Slowly, without stopping, it silently progressed.

At that time, his countenance, rigidness, and forcefulness increased, and the amount of people hanging around him decreased.

After he returned to his room, the rumors of him losing his temper slowly spread around.

The room was especially bad today.

He shoved away the furniture around, and the breaking sounds and screams resonated even on the outside.

After raging for a while, Ilumgand sat on his couch and suddenly yelled.

“Oi, reinstated! Oi, are you there?!”

Thought transmission.

He didn’t need to say it out loud, and yet, Ilumgand voiced out what he was saying in his thought transmission.

Proof that he is quite irritated.

(… Sorry. I was doing something. Ilum-sama, what's wrong? Are you running out of medicine?)

The voice that responded to the yell, was a glossy voice.

It is the person in duty that hears out the progress reports after he received the medicine.

When the student said superior, Ilumgand thought that it would be a male, but when he connected the thought transmission, it was a woman.

The woman responded to the emotional voice of Ilumgand in an extremely calm demeanor.

(That's not it! What is going on?! Why is the class of a mere temporary teacher having more increasing effects than the medicine?! Are you telling me that's also one of the plans you guys have been doing secretly in the academy?!)

(… Ilum-sama, please calm down)

(How can I be calm?! Today, I lost to a student that has only been attending Raidou's classes a few times! A woman that has a lower level than mine!)

(There's not supposed to be any such plan though… Raidou. Are you saying the name of that teacher is Raidou?)

(That's right! That ugly, mere merchant that makes a fool out of me wherever I go!)

Ilumgand's exasperation was the very definition of the stupid nobles he hated with a passion.

And Ilumgand didn't even notice that.

There's no noticeable secondary effects.

That's certainly true.

The concerned person, Ilumgand, is unable to notice it after all.

The woman that continues talking with a calm voice as always, slightly ponders when the name Raidou was mentioned.

She thought that it would take a bit more time.

She has been destroying the calm in Ilumgand's heart little by little.

Just like how his heart is inclined to defeat.

All she has actually done is assist in the medicine's effect, and has not really placed any suggestions or anything like that.

That's why she thought that even if it comes into fruition fast, it would need at least half a year. However, Ilumgand was cornered faster than she thought, and for her, he is being completed in a good sense.

But at the same time, being too fast brings anxiety.

The main cause of Ilumgand's accelerated destruction, Raidou.

She felt that she has to see that person at least once.

Because she couldn't think it possible that a female student whose level was a lot lower than the strengthened Ilumgand could beat him.

Without saying it in the thought transmission, that's what the woman thought.

'At least for hyumans'

Her interest was pointed to the academy town that already had no need to head to.

(Understood. Ilum-sama's regret, I have understood it well. I thought about waiting for your body to get used to it a bit more, but I will prescript you the next medicine)

(?! The next medicine?! If there's such a thing, bring it out from the beginning!)

(Sorry. It is because that medicine has a light side effect. For people that can't control their emotions, it will bring danger, and more importantly, the body will also…)

(I don't care! I can control my emotions! Are you making a fool of me, you bastard?!)

(Truly sorry. I have said too much. Please forgive me, Ilum-sama. Well then, I will bring it to you as soon as possible. Also, we have a necklace that increases magic resistance. Consider it a gift from us. We will be sending it along as well, so please do use it. It isn't something bulky, so it won't be a hindrance)

(Hmph! don't think such a mere gift will compensate for your previous utterance!)

(Of course. We will not be frugal in our cooperation hereafter, so please do pardon me)

(Those words, don't forget them!)

Ilumgand one-sidedly cuts off the thought transmission.

The woman that was in a dim room, seemed like she was going to leak out a sigh, but instead, she silently bended her mouth into a smile.

"Fufufu. It seems quite a good wind is blowing. I can control my emotions, huh. What a funny young man. With this, the Hopelace has fallen. Limia will have to move no matter what now. But… Raidou… was it? It would be troublesome if it goes too far, so maybe I should confirm what kind of person it is, at least once"

Blue skin, a face with no horn.

The woman that stood still in the room alone, demon general Rona, placed a hand over her mouth as if thinking something.

This is a story that happened a bit before she pretended to be Karen Frost and infiltrated the school.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

Timing.

I can't mess up the opportunity.

This is the final step of the plan.

The final phase of a plan that was carefully laid out.

"Until this point, the plan has proceeded in a truly smooth manner. Leaving aside Limia, the problem was how many high officials of Gritonia we would be able to pull, but I didn't think Princess Lily would fish them out. Moreover, the princess fished the Limia King as well. I can't stop laughing"

There's only one worry.

Kuzunoha Company's, Raidou.

He said he was neutral, but he is also a hyuman. He is an ingredient that brings anxiety.

I want him to owe us, but it will be troublesome if there's an impediment in our plan.

At least, with Larva there, Raidou won't be in danger regarding this matter.

It also depends on how loyal that Lich is to him, but Raidou himself possesses quite the fighting power.

In the worst case scenario, it is possible that he would move to suppress the situation.

Even so, thinking about the information relay ability of the hyumans under a chaotic situation, there won't be any problems.

That's right. Depending on his posting, the demerit of the demon race will be big.

"Raidou, you accepted the meeting with the demon lord-sama, so you must have a certain amount of interest in us right? In that case, please overlook us this time okay?"

It sounds as if I were praying to someone. Haha.

Even though we have no God to pray to.

“Rona!”

The partner in this time’s plan and also a demon general as well. The loud voice of that giant resonates.

Now then, it is the time for fruition.

Let’s watch the end of the heroes.

The death of all that oppose the demon lord will tell us of our victory.

Chapter 132: Team battles, finals

I feel heavy.

Soon, I will be doing an act that is akin to betraying everyone here.

The business in Rotsgard as well, it is safe to assume that continuing it will be hard.

I still haven't met them yet, but it seems I have caught the eye of several big-shots.

Asking Rembrandt-san is, as expected, something I can't bring myself to do.

I have been in his care way too much after all.

The reason why the Kuzunoha Company went well in Tsige was because I had the follow-up of him.

It's free to operate in towns, it's based on your skills; so as long as you provide good stuff, you will succeed. That's not the case.

In that town there's probably no one who would want to be glared by Rembrandt-san, so that discretion served as a help for me.

The business there went well, so I went and misunderstood that I was beginning to get used to doing business.

In the middle of it, I was totally made a fool of.

He wanted Rembrandt-san to owe him, so he told me that he would overlook me if I just leave the town.

That really got me.

Just remembering that makes my anger well up. My anger of him, the anger that comes from my own worthlessness; they well up and mix.

That representative was a person that gave the impression as if gold is supremacy. That's the kind of sense of value he seemed to live with.

Looking at how hard it was to deal with him and the things he said, Rembrandt-san might have been like that before his family fell ill.

Because if he is able to go against that representative in higher than even grounds, I don't think he would say any soft things.

It is mortifying, but it is true that I am not fit as a merchant.

I understand what he said.

It's true that I was naïve.

In the end, I am running away and making a connection with the demon race.

In the worst case, not only the one here but the store in Tsige as well, and the relationships formed at that town, everything will be…

No matter if Rembrandt-san said all that to me, I will be going to a camp that's going against hyumans and having troubles with the Goddess. I can't burden him.

I will be secluding in the country that my mom and dad were huh.

I even came to a parallel world. What am I doing?

In the tournament grounds that is crowded and giving off heat, I sit in the seat that I had reserved, and look at the stage where no one is in.

There's only the finals left in the team battles of the tournament.

The match of the students I might not be able to meet anymore. I

have to properly watch over it.

They safely won through the semifinals.

The obvious pestering that was the level limit didn't have that much effect on them it seems.

They must have gotten used to the mock battles with the mist lizard where they had to fight by using teamwork.

Just that, there's something bothering me.

The second son of Hopelace.

His state in the semifinals wasn't normal.

"That… doesn't give a good feeling. Tomoe, can you tell?" (Makoto)

"About that noble? Fumu… he is probably using some kind of magic or drug to increase his power, and that's its side effect, maybe?" (Tomoe)

"What do you think Mio?" (Makoto)

"It gave an unsavory feeling. Like some sort of hyuman mixed with something else. I can see a disgusting tint" (Mio)

"Like a demi-human?" (Makoto)

"No. How to say it? Uhm, hyuman and demi-humans are of different types, but it is like having two of the same bread tied together, and the disgusting feeling would be embedded inside it. Like a pound cake with dry fruits inside?" (Mio)

I kind of get it and kind of not.

"I, see…" (Makoto)

I hold an opinion similar to that of Tomoe.

A hollow atmosphere as if he lost his sanity.

Crush his opponents with abnormal brute strength. But instead of

calling it hyuman, it is more like a mamono.

The surrounding members were not as serious as him, but I can't think of them as normal either.

In this tournament it is prohibited to use magic drugs, so I don't think it is medicine but… in that case, maybe magic?

Well, even if their strength gets higher, from what I have seen, it is lower than Zwei-san.

In technique, there's no need to mention. Lower than blue lizard.

If it's with three, my students will win.

That's why there's no need to worry that much but…

"Shiki, I was thinking you would be coming back anytime now. How is their condition?" (Makoto)

"Waka-sama, they have been doing an intense battle of rock, paper, scissors for the rights of participating" (Shiki)

"Fufu, glad to see they are not tense" (Makoto)

Shiki had returned from looking after the students.

He answered my question with no hesitation, and told me about the students' condition.

"Shiki, what did you think about that Hopelace boy? He gives out quite a different atmosphere compared to the individual battles" (Makoto)

"… Yeah. I can't say anything definite, but I think he is being done something" (Shiki)

"Being done?" (Makoto)

"Yes. He is losing his sanity. I think that's a type of magic drug. It resembles something I have handled a long time ago" (Shiki)

Medicine huh.

So he really can make anything valid.

I feel like I kind of understand how it is to get into trouble with a noble.

“It’s a magic drug that turns hyumans into ghouls. Changing them into a half-dead state, and enslaving them. Well, it would have been okay to make it have an immediate effect, but it turned out as a frail article that couldn’t be used and ended up as a failure” (Shiki)

I can easily get Shiki to talk about his past deeds, but the amount of pitch black content is not low.

This is one of many.

He does pretty frightening stuff.

“Enslaving huh. It at least doesn’t seem like he is being controlled, and doesn’t look frail either” (Makoto)

“Yes. Even when predicting the highest battle power he could get, in the worst case, there won’t be problems if we stop it. I have told the students to retire if it turns dangerous. Rather, I am-” (Shiki)

I cut into the words of Shiki.

“Shiki… you told them that?” (Makoto)

“Yes, I did though?” (Shiki)

“Ah～, if you tell them that, they would definitely do something rash. Amelia being the first in the list” (Makoto)

Even if it is not her, the others will probably go with the enthusiasm of ‘I will win’.

“Those were words brought out of concern though…” (Shiki)

“In the worst case, it is fine to stop them even if it turns into a defeat. And so, Shiki, what were you trying to say before?” (Makoto)

“Ah, about Hopelace. The necklace he was using before equipping his armor piqued my interest” (Shiki)

“Necklace? That guy, he still had more things he brought from his house?” (Makoto)

“It was disguised with a magic resistance effect” (Shiki)

Disguised?

That’s certainly strange.

That means there’s a hidden effect.

“Could it be, the type that awakens and gives a power-up?” (Makoto)

In times, accessories possess effects that are more dangerous than weapons. Well, that’s gamer logic though. But I only think this way because that guy really doesn’t care about what methods he uses after all.

“Awaken? No. I think it is some sort of accumulating effect. It didn’t seem like it was in function, and it worried me a bit” (Shiki)

For Shiki to hesitate, that’s unusual.

Ah, it’s fine to forget about my game logic explanation there.

“It kind of gives a bad presentiment. This whole town is giving a strange feeling” (Mio)

Mio looks at the sky and says this carefree.

It seems she sensed something that cannot be considered as a threat to her.

But in this situation where many things are mobilizing, the words of Mio…

“… Just in case, can you bring some equipment Jin and the others can use from the store? Leave it in their waiting room. And after

you finish doing that, let's watch together" (Makoto)

"Understood"

This may be the last thing I will be able to do for Jin and the others.

Weapons are something that just assist in shaking off problematic things though.

They are the kids I have been looking after for several months. I have grown attached to a certain extent.

… No, quite attached. I was being careful to avoid this from happening, but I was unable to.

For now, let's protect them.

"Sorry for the wait!! We will be beginning the finals of this tournament's team battles!!"

A resonant voice was emitted from the man that came up the stage.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

"Alright! Let's go! You pipsqueaks, don't go holding back on Hopelace!"

"I am not a pipsqueak! Like hell I would hold back. I can finally try the instant strengthening that Jin was doing, in real combat. If it goes well, it would be no different from going at my full strength"

"I think that making fun of one's body growth is childish! I will be stealing all the spotlight!!"

Shoulders, knees, elbows; in those kind of places, they had thick leather protectors equipped, and the three students who were wearing their battle uniform, talked in a cheerful manner.

The first words the tall boy said really described them well.

Jin and the pipsqueak combi.

Saying it that way, it really does fit.

The other two denied this, but the remaining members that had a gloomy atmosphere around them also thought this way.

“Why did I use rock at that moment?!”

“If you didn’t made it a draw there, I would have been able to participate…”

“Using paper 4 times in a row, are you a spammer?!”

“I couldn’t participate in a single match…”

The ones who lost in the participation battle.

In contrast to the three that are exultant and holding weapons, they seemed to be feeling down. And there was one that said something pretty tragic.

Holding a standard one-handed sword, there’s Jin; possessing a spear the same height as her, its Yuno; and with a barely good gem embedded at the tip of his staff, there’s Izumo.

These three were the winners.

The remaining four can’t participate, but they follow until the stage’s vicinity.

Just like that, Jin and the others go up the stage.

In front of them, the 7 match opponents were already there.

“Destroy, destroy, destroy…”

“Oioi, did you use a drug or something today, senpai? That’s just too late”

“Unsightly”

“Disgusting”

While looking at Jin and the others with eyes devoid of light, Ilumgand Hopelace holds his great sword with both hands.

Without getting worked up, Jin, Yuno and Izumo stood in a row.

The introductions of the participants is done in order.

By nature, just standing in this place is the best situation for the students that attend this academy, but this final was ruled by a strange atmosphere.

3 versus 7. There's also that.

But in the seven, there's one that's clearly not normal and being restless; and in the side of three, they show no sign of tension and simply smile.

And then, the strong gazes of interest from the audience seats and visitor seats that are expecting a match that will surpass the past years.

"Begin!!!"

The battle situation suddenly unfolded in a vehement manner.

Yuno and Izumo who were at both sides of Jin, both of them stepped back at their respective sides.

An abrupt enhanced acceleration. And it was a speed higher than that shown in the individual matches.

Using the instant enhancement of Jin as the concept, the two of them also learned it in a small space of time.

Makoto widening his eyes was just the onset.

And then, the other move…

Was from Ilumgand.

Maybe he has some grudge from the individual matches, he went in a straight line towards Jin.

That speed was slower than Yuno and Izumo, but it is an acceleration with his large body build and his whole body clad in

armor and a great sword.

The intensity was incomparable to the other two.

Sadly, Jin was not overwhelmed by that at all.

“Senpai! This is the last match, prepare!!” (Jin)

Jin gleefully accepts Ilumgand’s charge.

Just what he wished.

The remaining 6 at Ilumgand’s team were being approached by Yuno and Izumo from both sides.

Jin had no need to worry about them.

The 4 magicians were already chanting their arias, and the remaining 2 warriors were facing the 2 approaching respectively.

‘How stupid’ is what Jin thought as he bended his mouth into a smile.

Because that assured him that they weren’t able to read what the two were trying to do.

“The annoying thrash will beeeee crusheeeeed!!”

Without learning his lesson, Ilumgand unleashes the horizontal swipe that was crushed a few days ago.

Jin takes on that attack. There was no need to crush it.

He wanted to show Ilumgand that.

But he could tell from the sword that was swung with unexpected strength, that the wooden sword clad with magic power, which was supposed to take one hit without problems, was being wedged into. Jin’s body was pushed back.

“Tch!!” (Jin)

Clicking his tongue, Jin tried to switch the movements of his body

and pull his sword to divert the attack.

In that moment, he was assaulted by another unexpected attack.

While swinging the great sword just like that, Ilumgand forcibly takes one step, and with his open hand, he tried to punch Jin.

It was clearly a jumbled attack that is not taking into consideration the burden the body takes.

An attack that one would even think that it is enhanced.

By nature, it shouldn't be an attack that one would receive, but he was thinking about how he would make Ilumgand crawl in defeat. Most of his thought process was directed there.

It was Jin's negligence.

(I can't dodge it. That bastard) (Jin)

The fist approaches his face.

Understanding that it already reached the point of being unavoidable, Jin instinctively brings up the hand that was holding the sword.

Accurately speaking, his elbow.

It may not be much, but there's protectors there.

That defense miraculously made it in time, and the fist of Ilumgand crashes into Jin's left elbow.

Without minding that it crashed into his elbow, the fist continues its momentum.

Jin was blown slightly to the back and toppled over. But stood up immediately and fixed his stance.

Not releasing the sword from his hands even with the unexpected shock was as expected of him.

"Is that how nobles fight? Tch, getting the better of me when sensei

is watching” (Jin)

An intense anger flickers in Jin’s eyes.

Receiving that attack was mostly because of his own negligence, but in the midst of the battle’s exaltation, those kind of thoughts didn’t enter his mind.

“Yuno, Izumo. Sorry, but I will be beginning first” (Jin)

Lowly, Jin’s whisper leaks out.

As if seizing Ilumgand’s second rush, this time, Jin also charged.

Chapter 133: Team battles, conclusion

On the other hand, Izumo and Yuno approach the 6 that were lying in wait.

The two warriors were already prepared with their lances, but the arias of the magicians would still take time.

The first one to act was Yuno.

She hasn't closed the distance between the closest warrior, and yet, she threw the spear in her hands as if sewing the two warriors.

The spear that flew straight ahead made a direct hit towards the chest of the furthest male magician as if it gravitated towards him.

It didn't pierce.

It was wooden, on top of that, the tip was dull and rounded.

The spear lost its momentum and fell in place, but the magician that was hit by the attack was thrown back heavily and falls face up.

"Bull's~ Eye~!!" (Yuno)

A cheerful voice resounds in the stage.

As if truly enjoying it. A voice that just hearing it would cheer you up as well.

Even though what she is doing is not fun, but more like, something incredibly painful.

Yuno didn't stop for even a second, and the warrior that got his attention taken by the flying spear, even if he tried to stop her

approach, his legs couldn't move.

It's Izumo.

He stopped his accelerated movement and finished his aria. Because of all the attention Yuno took, the caution towards him had lowered, and without missing that chance, ice climbed up to their feet. They were wrapped in ice to their knees.

Just like that, Izumo begins to chant an aria at the proximity of the two warriors.

The attention to Yuno switches to Izumo.

This time, Yuno acts.

Just like how the spear went in between the space of the warriors, she gets into the bosom of the closest magician without faltering.

The spell still hasn't finished yet, and looking at the magic power that has only gathered to the tip of the staff, she looked at the chin of the magician and slowly pushed up the bottom of her palm to it.

The palm stroke of a small build girl.

Be that as it may, she used her lower body as a spring, placing her weight on it and make a blow.

The man that received this on his chin sprang up, and even his body slightly flew up.

In the middle of the welling up cheers, Yuno took her time to change her palm into an elbow strike right onto the open abdomen.

Both of those attacks had body enhancement applied.

It isn't something that a magician hurrying with his aria would be able to endure.

He pathetically falls to the outsides of the stage, and his doll is destroyed.

Remarkably loud cheers resound in the area.

“Ooo~ne!!” (Yuno)

Yuno’s eyes were already focusing on the next target. All the magicians that were lined up were her targets.

The first man that received the spear attack was trembling intensely while trying to somehow stand up.

She understood even that.

That’s why she said ‘One’.

“Armory—HIIIIH!!”

Seeing her companion being blown away, the woman magician’s aria is broken.

She knew that she was the next target of Yuno Rembrandt because of those ferocious eyes aiming at her.

“Second one, I will be taking it~!!” (Yuno)

Easily slipping through the swung staff, she gave up on activating the spell and gives out an attack with her staff, but the small build girl evaded it.

How is she able to make such bewildering movements in close range? The magician girl was unable to understand at all.

In her field of vision, Yuno was already not there anymore.

Where did she disappear? Before she was able to feel that fear of not knowing where her opponent is, she felt a blunt but strong shock.

That’s when she was no longer able to feel fear anymore.

“Freebie!!” (Yuno)

Yuno instantly appeared behind the magician, and smashed an elbow on the girl’s medulla oblongata.

It can be called a pretty dangerous attack.

Of course, the doll that served as the scapegoat was heavily damaged at the head part, and shook weakly.

It narrowly escaped destruction.

But along with the words ‘freebie’, Yuno grabbed the arm of the girl and threw her to the remaining magician, and with that, the doll was destroyed completely.

In just a short amount of time, Yuno defeated two magicians with scary body technique.

It’s still not over yet.

The dance was still not over yet.

“Okay, three!!” (Yuno)

The female student, having her comrade thrown at her and losing her balance, by the time she faced forward, Yuno was already there.

She placed one leg on the knee of the kneeling girl.

The moment the other leg of Yuno took the field of vision of that female student, the fight was already decided.

She doesn’t know that that technique is called ‘Shining Wizard’ and it’s a technique that is praised highly.

She just did it because it seemed like she could do it.

Looking at the movements of Yuno that didn’t let the magicians do practically anything, the sensei of her, Raidou, stiffened his face and was impressed by her growth. Later, this will please her a lot.

“Spear recovered~. And then, fourth!” (Yuno)

“Agah!!”

Yuno arrives at the place where her thrown spear was and recovers it.

The male magician that was finally about to regain his footing from the damage had his staff hit by the spear.

With that attack that was made without delay, the staff made a dry sound and falls over.

And while it, she does a side strike at the magician as if saying ‘go to sleep’.

Sinking once again, he didn’t move an inch more.

The doll was also destroyed.

“Done! It’s my win huh, Izumo-kun” (Yuno)

“Just a bit longer and it would have been mine. I have lost” (Izumo)

Izumo turns around and looks at Yuno.

Those movements were the same as a victory declaration.

In her field of vision there were the backs of fallen warriors with their whole body wounded.

“Wind Blade. When activating it with shortened aria and continuous fire, as expected, its power falls. It ended up feeling as if I brought them down with numbers. Hah…” (Izumo)

Just as Izumo said in his disappointed words, the well-build warriors had several shallow cuts everywhere and their equipment was shredded.

One of them was staggering and then collapsed. The other warrior was collapsed a long time ago and lost consciousness.

Having their movements sealed, the pitiful warriors were mangled by a large quantity of invisible blades.

“Fufu~ well then, the one left is…!! AAAAAHH?!!!” (Yuno)

“Eh, Yuno, what’s wr—ong…? Jin, didn’t you say you wouldn’t do a head start!?” (Izumo)

For the first time since the match began, the voices of Yuno and Izumo were flustered.

In the place they are gazing at, there's the remaining one, Ilumgand Hopelace, and their comrade, Jin.

Against the rampaging Ilumgand that's leaving all to strength, Jin didn't back off even once, but it is just that he hasn't let a single direct hit connect, and has one-sidedly attacked.

When Jin and the other two made a preparatory meeting, he promised. It doesn't look like he is holding back.

That tempest of attacks had an intensity that was as if saying he wanted to end the fight.

'We will defeat Ilumgand with the three of us'

'That's why Yuno and Izumo will defeat the other members first'

Jin would pin down Ilumgand.

That's the kind of plan that was promised.

"Haven't you become laughably tough, Ilumgand-senpai?! What interesting physical strength! Try struggling more!!" (Jin)

"Guugh, uwu, destroy, destro- giii"

The strength and technique of Ilumgand has enough competency to win the last year's tournament without doubts.

And yet, Jin was overpowering him.

Concentrating on a strength based fighting can be considered an error of Ilumgand though.

In the guest seats, it was already not only just a part, everyone had begun noticing this abnormality.

That between them, there's not only a difference in level. And in those, there were discerning ones that have begun understanding

that Jin and the other six students were learning in a different way.

“Ah… If we don’t go soon, our share will be gone!” (Yuno)

“Wait a moment, Yuno” (Izumo)

“Izumo-kun?” (Yuno)

“This is strange. He is being beaten up that badly, and yet, there’s practically no damage in the doll. From what I see, it isn’t like all the attacks are being absorbed by the armor” (Izumo)

“… That’s true” (Yuno)

“Also, Jin is mixing several attacks with the intention of knocking him out, and yet, it isn’t showing effect at all” (Izumo)

“Well, Jin may have a bad mouth, but he is unexpectedly kind at times. Against Hopelace, who has been doing whatever he wanted until now, I wouldn’t go for the knockout but for the eternal embarrassment. Jin is probably thinking about the after-effects or something like that” (Yuno)

“… You, you are actually quite the wicked one huh. Well, I do feel the same way as you regarding Ilumgand-senpai though” (Izumo)

“Anyways, let’s go” (Yuno)

“I am fine here. I will begin my aria. If you two are in the vanguard, I can be at the rear without worries” (Izumo)

“I see. Then!!” (Yuno)

Yuno finished her conversation with Izumo and gathers strength in her legs to join the fight of Jin against Ilumgand.

Almost at the same time…

Jin takes distance from Ilumgand.

And it wasn’t as if he was planning to do so. It looked like he did so because it was an urgent evasion.

“If you plan on coming, be careful! Senpai feels kind of dangerous right now” (Jin)

“Un-der-stood～!” (Yuno)

While a flashy exchange of blows unfolded, Jin was minding the state of his two companions. Jin notices Yuno’s fervor and gives her a warning.

With a light tone and showing anger every now and then, Jin was grasping the progress of the battle composedly.

(This guy being dangerous is strange. No matter how many times I hit him, his movements don’t grow dull, and I can’t knock him out either) (Jin)

Even though he shows sharp techniques from time to time, in basis, Ilumgand has been leaving it all to strength.

Swinging around his great sword, striking his opponent, and inflicting damage.

The way he is using his sword is that of someone that has learned the ways of the sword, but those thoughts were dyed by strength.

It was clearly not the usual him.

Even from the perspective of Jin who clashed swords with him a few days ago, it was enough to consider abnormal.

“Referee! Is it okay to continue this?! Senpai is clearly strange” (Jin)

“Everything… if it weren’t for him… if he weren’t there… if he just…”

“… I can tell that he still holds the will to continue. Seeing the doll, your attacks have not done considerable damage. Continue”

The referee is judging by the doll’s damage.

As long as it is safe, and as long as he isn’t knocked out, it seems he

intends to let it continue.

‘Maybe this has something to do with Hopelace giving money?’

For a moment, Jin thought of that, but it can also be taken as the referee’s way of judging things.

Also, if it’s okay to continue, he just has to finish it fast and there would be no need to tag along with this strange play.

“I-I!! Along with the hero-sama, ideals, my ideals… Raidou, Raidou!! Don’t get in the way”

Ilumgand bellows. In that resentment, the name of Raidou was mentioned.

Not Jin, Yuno, or Izumo.

And then, his strength increased more than before.

Jin felt as if Ilumgand’s body grew a size larger.

The hand of Jin trembled slightly.

A loathsome color was also mixed in his expression.

“… Like hell I know! I am not sensei, and I don’t care about your ideals. The ideals of someone that uses dirty methods, there’s no value in listening to them!!” (Jin)

Cutting the words of Ilumgand, Jin slips through the great sword that was swung downwards and closes into Ilumgand.

The hook that was released towards Jin, and the combo of sword and fists were unable to catch him.

(The bad feeling is getting steadily stronger. I don’t know what he is planning, but I have to finish it fast. From what I can tell, it looks like he also prepared something for Yuno and Izumo. Push it through or will I be able to finish it?) (Jin)

Jin’s body contracts like a spring.

To use his body as a firing support for his lunge.

The released body became a blur, and the lunge accurately aimed at Ilumgand's jaw.

"Yuno, Izumo! If you are going to do something, join together! We are pushing it through!" (Jin)

It will hit.

Thinking that, Jin turns his eyes towards his comrades for an instant and tells them his intentions.

They already began moving.

While thinking that he probably wants to link attacks, he clearly tells them that he will be the origin point.

At this point, the expectations get off the mark.

The lunge of Jin was unable to hit Ilumgand's jaw.

Ilumgand made his body smaller, and stops the oncoming attack with his face. Precisely speaking, with his mouth.

With his teeth, he stopped the lunge of Jin completely.

"… You must have a screw loose!!" (Jin)

While distorting his face because of the strangeness of the situation, Jin immediately copes with it.

Releasing the handle from his right hand, he hits the pommel with the lower part of his palm.

Stepping strongly on the stone paving and directing the strength of his lower half to his palm, he pushes in one breath.

The tip was still stopped by the teeth, but by applying that strength, the body of Ilumgand rose obliquely backwards.

"Nice. Leave the rest to us! Yuno, I'm counting on you. Aerial!!" (Izumo)

The spell of Izumo activates.

Several meters around the circumference of Ilumgand, a light emerald luminescence radiated.

Jin, who was slightly inside that area, does a back-step and retreats.

The body of Ilumgand that was about to fall, stopped in midair.

And then, just like that, his arms and feet rise up as if being pushed up by something.

It was the effect of the spell.

Binding the freedom of the target and the things several meters around, it pushes them up with wind.

That's all that spell does. Aside from that, there's no attack power.

"I can hold it for 20 seconds okay?!" (Izumo)

"I know! Well then. Here I gooo~!!" (Yuno)

She was already approaching Ilumgand who was beginning to rise, and with a violent light in her eyes, Yuno enters the emerald magic area.

Also, in that last step when she entered, her hair flew straight up.

Of course, knowing her own velocity, Yuno rides the ascending flow and arrives to where Ilumgand is.

From there, the attacks of her began.

They were thoughtless attacks.

At first, they were attacks that took into account the rising speed, and while avoiding the arms and feet that were swung disorderly, she dished out merciless consecutive spear strikes.

Moreover, those were attacks aiming at the joints of the armor and at the unprotect parts.

It was clear that she was moving in a way that is not normal in that space.

Completely different from Ilumgand who is unable to regain the balance of his body, she was showing vivid moves.

“It’s probably almost time～ well then, senpai, it seems you like weapons to the point of eating them, so～ this is a present!!” (Yuno)

Kicking the body of the great sword that was aiming at her, Yuno exits the area of the spell.

A throwing stance.

She places acceleration and endows the spear with magic power.

The magic power endowment, even when it leaves the body of the caster, its effects will still linger for an incredibly low period of time depending on the caster.

For Yuno, it was a distance that barely reached that effective time, but without even faltering for a bit, she shoots the accelerated spear towards Ilumgand in a situation where she doesn’t have stable footing.

Of course, since she exited the rising area, she will drop.

Taking in mind the safety of her, Jin hurries to the estimated drop point, but that was needless worry.

Falling from around ten meters up, Yuno decelerates with plenty leeway at her landing point. Accurately speaking, she used an incomplete floating spell on herself and safely landed.

A perfect floating magic was still not achievable for her.

Even before the drop of Yuno, the area that had begun to dim in color lost its effect, and before she landed, it vanished.

The one left there was only Ilumgand who had blood flowing at the side of his face.

Witnessing a midair fight for the first time ever in this tournament, the audience was dumbfounded, but the moment they saw the appearance of Ilumgand, they finally checked the doll.

It was heavily damaged and shaking.

Still not destroyed.

But what will happen when he drops?

He will at least not escape without any injuries, that's for sure.

"You do some scary attacks, oi" (Jin)

"If the person is not used to midair, it will not be able to resist properly, so at first I was trying it out for fun, but for people that experience it for the first time, it is unexpectedly effective. So the two of us discussed about it" (Yuno)

"To use this on Zwei-san is our current objective!" (Izumo)

The three gather harmoniously and were conversing.

In the moment of the drop…

A dull sound reverberated.

Two of Ilumgand's dolls broke.

They splendidly broke.

"…… T-The end!! Team battle finals, winners: Jin Roan, Izumo Ikusabe and Yuno Rembrandt!"

But…

The tournament in this land was still not over yet.

Chapter 134: The enemy of my enemy is?

"That last one looked pretty fun-desu wa ne" (Mio)

"Umu, maybe I should also try it once. It's an interesting idea-ja" (Tomoe)

"… A Shining Wizard and a midair combo. Don't tell me Yuno is the same type as Eris" (Makoto)

The team battle finals concluded.

He may have shown surprising defensive power and toughness, but it didn't turn into as much of a close game as I thought, and Ilumgand sunk.

In the middle of it, there was something that caught my attention, but that was also finished when I saw the midair combo.

As the Hopelace's second son, he talked about authority, showed a fight that was completely different from his general notion, and without being able to show off much in the match, it finished.

His relatives must have come to see him as well. How pitiful.

The last spear totally hit his face too.

Even if it's wooden, it was still impressive that the spear broke.

Was the throw of Yuno that good, or was it the face of Ilumgand that was hard?

Whichever it is, I think his consciousness was taken away with that attack.

"The ideas of Waka's students are interesting. They are weak, but I

could feel that they are used to scheming” (Tomoe)

“Right. The finals were pretty fun. The body techniques of that girl were great” (Mio)

Tomoe and Mio seem to have enjoyed it.

That they didn’t show any will to evaluate the fight in the end is, well, it can’t be helped.

They are not hyumans to begin with, and in their perspective, they honestly feel that they are no more than chicks.

But I feel a bit relieved.

If they are able to think that well by themselves and look for their own with a clear objective in mind, no matter when my class finishes, they would still be fine.

Well then, I will go to the waiting room as well and congratulate them.

And while it, check Hopelace’s state… No, I should not do that one.

It would be troublesome if I get into a problem again.

I stand up and was about to move, but then, I noticed an abnormality.

Jin and the others prepared their weapons. Yuno lost her spear so she made a stance with her fists.

Those movements were already at the level of martial arts.

I didn’t teach her that at all, or more like, I can’t teach her that, so she probably learned hand-to-hand combat from another teacher.

But the referee already declared the end of the match.

There should be no need for them to prepare their weapons.

And in the direction they are facing, there’s the fallen Ilumgand.

“What?”

“Waka, there’s a strange magic power coming out from that brat. He is releasing an incredibly wicked aura that is coiled around emotions” (Tomoe)

Tomoe tells me.

I am not using the [Sakai] for search and examination.

I am using it to suppress my power after all.

Also, my perception ability without using Sakai is not impressive at all.

“Really, but it is strange-desu wa. It looks like it is not only the current emotions, old emotions are joined together as well. It feels awful-desu” (Mio)

Mio is looking at Ilumgand as if looking at something weird.

The released magic power was probably amplifying. It changed into the special color that appears when powerful magic power is unleashed or used.

At that point, even I can clearly tell.

What I am saying is that his magic power had changed to the color suitable for water magic, blue.

I am not saying it defines the weakness and fortes of an individual, but it does have a big effect in the path you take.

His gentle blue that’s close to light blue is normally seen in people specialized in healing and support.

By the way, in my case, it is a darkish deep blue. Its specialty is… Tte, this is not the time for that.

“It doesn’t seem… like he is doing this out of his will. Should we stop it?” (Makoto)

“Aren’t the people managing the tournament the ones who should do something? It does feel strange though” (Tomoe)

In the middle of Tomoe’s words, Ilumgand stands up.

Jin and the others take proper battle formation. But Amelia who is outside the stage shouts something.

After that, the three dissolve their stance and go down the stage. As if following Amelia, they all simultaneously left through the exit.

Ah.

They went to take the weapons in the waiting room huh.

That means…

“Waka-sama, it seems it has turned into a slightly bad situation. Should I say, it has eaten a lot?” (Shiki)

Just as I thought, Shiki speaks.

“Jin and the others went to retrieve their weapons right?” (Makoto)

“Yes. I told them that it was a reward from Waka-sama for winning the championship. Just in case, I thought they would be able to hold it back temporarily with those so I instructed them to return” (Shiki)

“That… noble, just what is going on with him?” (Makoto)

“He is in an incredibly dangerous state. No, it can already be considered too late. He has taken a dosage of at least several months to make his body get used to this abnormality, and that time has come” (Shiki)

“The time… has come?” (Makoto)

So it is really not his will.

But it is surprising that it was able to escape all the diagnosis of the academy.

Doping for several months?

“Yeah. That’s not hyuman anymore. It is already beginning to change into a variation” (Shiki)

“… What’s a variation?” (Makoto)

“Just as the word implies. It’s when a hyuman changes into something that’s not hyuman anymore. I am also a type of variation. I turned into it by my own will, so my circumstances are different from his though. There was a period of time when I was interested in the borders of hyumans and non-hyumans, and experimented with it. I presume there’s no mistake” (Shiki)

“Just for what or who did he do this for? Hopelace is a big noble right? Is there anyone who would choose to make them their enemy? From what I hear, it seems to be quite planned out, and it feels ominous” (Makoto)

“… Waka-sama, are you really saying that? This kind of advanced magic, use of drugs, and the nature of the plan. Hyumans are the target. Seeing the situation, there’s only one power that would execute this kind of plan” (Shiki)

“Eh? But the demon race is different right? Rona-san pulled back her troops and she said that she would cooperate for the sake of Jin and Amelia” (Makoto)

That’s right.

I requested Rona-san to hurriedly withdraw the demons in Rotsgard. There’s no way she would do something like this.

“But, did that woman say anything about not doing anything in Rotsgard?” (Shiki)

“No. She just listened to my request, and then I promised her I would meet the demon lord later, that’s all” (Makoto)

“Then, even if this is the deed of that woman, she hasn’t broken her promise with Waka-sama. At the very least, that’s what Rona would say” (Shiki)

Wouldn't that just be a play of words? Sophism?

I didn't want the demon race to cause any problems in the school festival.

Because the matter with Hopelace suddenly came up, I asked Rona to temporarily withdraw the demons since I have scarce personnel.

She accepted that.

Then, that would mean she doesn't intent to cause anything here right?

Didn't it mean she accepted that?

"Isn't that just sophism?" (Makoto)

"It was only a verbal promise after all. Even if she acts in a good willed manner, Waka-sama is still hyuman. I don't think Rona would reveal everything to you. Also, that woman saw a part of Waka-sama's power and has caught a hold of my existence. In that case, no matter what strife they cause, we would be able to get through it, that's why she didn't say it beforehand. Or maybe, if she told you and you were to do something to counter it, it might bring big disadvantages for her" (Shiki)

The demon race…

I thought at least the demon race would be…!

In terms of forming a relationship or negotiating, I thought they would not be a bad option, and yet…

In the end, maybe the thought of expecting a genuine ally was wrong.

Advantages and disadvantages, phrasing, diplomacy.

It is truly filled with troublesome things.

"From what I hear, the demon race is also not the type that one can deal with ordinary methods" (Makoto)

“Every single one deceiving Waka-sama… They only think about themselves! How unsightly. I can’t forgive them-desu wa!!” (Mio)

In truth, I didn’t feel confident working along with hyumans, so I wanted to try talking with the demon race and see. But, are you trying to tell me that that thinking was naïve?

Or are you telling me to swallow something of this level and negotiate with the demon race?

“…”

The regret that had no place to smash into and the mortification that couldn’t turn into words, were turned into breath and exhaled.

Damn it.

Damn it, damn it, damn it, DAMN IT!!!!

I know!

I have already noticed!

This place is bigger than I thought.

Me and the Kuzunoha Company have gathered quite a lot of attention and have begun receiving interference.

This place doesn’t belong to any country, so I thought it wouldn’t gather that much attention, but I have understood that it was completely the opposite.

Not only the four major powers, even the demon race has locked their eyes on us.

Getting played around by the hyumans, Merchant Guild, demon race; not only can’t I freely do business, I am beginning to lose my understanding of how to act.

I stayed unaware of the wideness of the stage I am standing in for way too long.

Can I do it? At this late of a time?

Using Kaleneon, I would hide from all troublesome things in a place I can't be found.

Even so, as long as I have talked to the Ansland sisters, there's no way I can just not do it!

"R-Raidou-sensei, this is terrible! There are several monsters rampaging in town!!"

"…"

"At the surroundings of Gotetsu, at the surrounding of Kuzunoha Company as well; everywhere has fallen into a terrible chaos! For now it doesn't seem like there is that much damage, but…"

The voice of Eva and Ruria.

When I turned, I see that the two of them were there, out of breath.

Truly good timing.

For them to come talk to me when I thought about them.

There's also monsters in the town huh.

Because of my experience in this kind of things, my head was able to stay calm.

Tomoe told me that getting ahead of myself is not good, but the summer vacation was valuable for me.

I see.

Ilumgand's variation. Things similar to that are probably happening in several places.

Rona-san… Rona.

Damn it.

You… deceived me right?

‘I didn’t lie’ or ‘You didn’t ask me’, I don’t care about any of those.

If as a result, I have seen it in that way…

You won’t have any problems if I act dishonestly as well right?

It is okay to think that you guys had nothing to do with this and cope with it while having that thought in mind, right?

I do think it was a one-sided trust.

Even so, I can tell that the feeling of being deceived and my opposition to her are welling up.

“If we don’t run away fast or deal with it, this place will also be dangerous sensei!”

[Eva-san, Ruria, calm down]

“But!”

“It feels incredibly dangerous!”

[Yeah. Please tell me everything you know. Also, it may be a bit fast, but I want the answer as well. I want to hear the answer from the question a few days ago]

“??!!”

I could tell that both sisters gulped their breath.

It is weird that, seeing the restless state of these girls, I am steadily growing calmer.

The surrounding audience that saw the abnormal state of Ilumgand, and some that maybe heard the information from outside, suddenly fall into a state of panic, and the noisiness also increased at a fast rate.

The only ones calm around were us.

… It thoroughly makes me hate my own naivety.

I have not been through any bad things with the demon race, so they are good guys. Truly a childish thought.

I am an idiot who doesn't even know the 'N' in negotiation.

The enemy of my enemy is my ally.

Even when I was in Japan, I thought: 'like hell that's the case', and yet, in reality I thought exactly like that.

I am an idiot, truly an idiot.

Even I think I am hopeless.

— But…

Even if it is an idiot, it doesn't mean whatever they do will be forgiven.

No matter how stupid that person is.

No matter where I go, I won't change my thinking that: 'Instead of the one being deceived, the one doing the deceiving is the wrong one'.

No matter what.

If this were a genuine negotiation and business discussion, me who was deceived would be the losing one.

But that's wrong.

This is a fighting scene where strength dictates the direction.

In that case, there are plenty of things I, we, are able to do.

First, I will hear Eva and Ruria's feelings.

And then, decide what I should do.

Without showing my disarrayed inside, I wait for the answer of the two with the usual face of Raidou.

Chapter 135: When I incidentally look, there are several paths

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WARNING: There's no carnage ahead. Only really humane thinking about consequences and actual thoughts of the future!

Oh and btw, first side story chapter has been done.
Here's the link: Side Story 1

[Both of you, are you fine with that? I will ask once more, you don't have any regrets right?]

"Of course. The name of Eva and the family name Ansland. If you are saying that's the price, I will give them to you. Please do as you wish" (Eva)

Eva-san didn't hesitate and answered my last confirmation immediately.

I thought she would be more adhered to her name. How unexpected.

"I also don't mind. To begin with, the time I was Ruria Ansland wasn't that long, so I don't have any attachment" (Ruria)

Following after her sister, Ruria also agreed.

Her gaze slightly strayed from me and directed it to the stage.

Ah right, Ilumgand was meddling with her.

I think her name has already turned into a name that's only be called when criticizing her. A name with no worth.

“Raidou-sensei, you also asked Ruria huh. What an evil disposition. What did you intend to do if one of us were to reject it?” (Eva)

“Really. You even told me to keep it a secret from Onee-chan. That kind of thing, I think it is of bad taste” (Ruria)

[If your opinions didn’t match, I would have wanted the two of you to forget that decision. But, I am glad. In a close future, ‘the moment’ will certainly come in some way. Please don’t forget this agreement. It may just be a verbal promise, but if it is broken, remember that your lives will not suffice]

For a second, I remember Rona and add words.

This time, I am the side that’s granting the wish of these girls.

There shouldn’t be much to worry, but just in case.

“AAAEEEOOOOO!!!”

After confirming again that the sisters nod, that cry resounded in the whole competition ground.

The unpleasant voice was from Ilumgand. No, the former Ilumgand.

While enveloped in a sky blue light, he convulses every now and then, and all parts of his body were swelling.

His skin color also turned into an ashen concrete-like color, and was turning into something humanoid.

Currently, he looks like a 2 meter meat ball with legs.

Should I call it, in the midst of transforming?

His neck is stretched in a pretty strange way and it’s quite horrific.

“He is absorbing the magic power of the collapsed ones. From what I can tell, that necklace is a tool that efficiently absorbs magic power of things in a particular state” (Shiki)

Shiki’s calm words.

“Fumu, using emotions as its fishing hook, it ties up magic power and when the main body awakens, it will begin gathering magic power from its surroundings. If it’s able to add to its power, it would make him a monster with the magic power of 6 people. Also, if you scatter people like that around the area and one were to activate, that person can use the others as feed. How interesting-ja na” (Tomoe)

Without showing much interest, Tomoe complements Shiki.

“I wouldn’t want to eat that-desu wa ne. It looks as if he were in a drunken frenzy, and on top of that, he looks unappetizing. And filthy” (Mio)

Mio turns her head away as if treating him like a filthy thing.

Jin hasn’t returned yet.

They left temporarily to get their weapons after all. They will show themselves in time.

“Shiki, I understand how he turned that way now. And then, can he be turned back to normal?” (Makoto)

From what I have heard of Eva-san and Ruria, there are also turned variations infesting the town.

Just in case, depending if there’s a chance to return them to normal, my orders will change.

“That would be difficult. That thing is something similar to a dish that used hyumans as its ingredient. To turn something cooked into ingredients again is… there are times when it is just not possible. Even if it is really possible, it would get increasingly difficult depending on how many were affected, and I think that it would take quite a long amount of time to resolve the situation this way. I wonder if it’s worth enough to do that” (Shiki)

Shiki doesn’t seem to like the idea that much.

But as long as I am not sure if this will be targeted to people close to me, I want to at least leave a counter-measure for it.

Because in basis, we don't have allies.

When I heard the comparison of turning cooking back to ingredients, the first thing I thought was that it was impossible. So this would be troublesome for Shiki.

"… Understood. Tomoe, call Mondo from Asora. Have him team up with Lime, make them give instructions to Akua and the others, and have them suppress the turmoil in town. I want some of them as samples for Shiki and the Arkes to research, so tell them that it is fine to use the Tree Punishment. Be the supervisor of their transportation as well please" (Makoto)

"As you will" (Tomoe)

After confirming that Tomoe nods and turns back, I tell her in thought transmission to order the standby personnel to suppress the town's turmoil.

To call Mondo and have them listen to his and Lime's orders.

The town seems to be in a terrible chaos, but our employees are all composed people.

In this kind of moments, they are truly reliable.

When the thought transmission connected for instructions, they already moved back all the merchandize that was in display, on top of that, they activated a defense barrier around the store and were in standby inside.

"Shiki follow-up for the students. No matter how monstrous Ilumgand turns, Shiki will still be able to handle it right?" (Makoto)

"Of course. Can't even consider it a warm-up. But, the orders just now, with the current number of people in the company, I think it would be hard to cover the whole town" (Shiki)

Shiki must have noticed that he would end up doing something laborious from the orders I gave to Tomoe and seems to be dejected, but he nods at my question and points out the problem in my order.

"… I see. Then I will call the Mist Lizards too. It would be troublesome if they were mistaken for mamonos, so… after incapacitating Ilumgand, let's have the students divide in 3 groups and help" (Makoto)

"In 3 groups?" (Shiki)

"Yeah. Later I will be calling the third Mist Lizard the students will be meeting" (Makoto)

"Understood" (Shiki)

"And then, Mio and I will…" (Makoto)

Grasp the number of monsters and their locations, after that, back-up everyone.

After saying all my thoughts, I closed my mouth.

…

Wait.

What am I doing?

I suddenly remember the bitterness of yesterday and my thoughts get interrupted.

It's true that Rona got me good.

In her perspective, it is something I didn't ask, so she didn't tell me. And from my perspective, I thought we were partners.

In the first place, we are not from the same camp, and making a request as if predicting her future plans, I can't help but feel stupid.

I don't think I will be able to easily trust the demon race anymore, and the promise I did with her, has already changed subtly inside me.

But even with that, is there a need for me to mobilize the Kuzunoha Company to suppress this chaos?

It can put Rona in check. And I can also get back at her for deceiving me.

But aside from that, what merit do we gain?

Yeah, think about it.

Not the usual where I concentrate and think by myself, but the thinking method I am familiar with until now.

Maybe because it has been long since I have used the bow alone, I have been thinking about thinks by myself, and most of the time I have reached the conclusion in that way.

But after coming here, probably because of my own limits, things have not gone well.

My field of vision is too narrow.

I should place several things in the balance, think about the future of that decision, and the things I can do.

The way of thinking that the representative talked about, the way of thinking about putting advantages and disadvantages as priority; maybe I should use them as reference.

(Tomoe, sorry. Can you return?) (Makoto)

(Yeah. No problem. Should I have Mondo return to Asora as well?) (Tomoe)

Mondo is already in the company?

No real need to return him.

(No, that's fine. Just that, please wait for a bit before shifting to action) (Makoto)

This is something that I should probably say in person.

(Then, I will order them to continue in standby and I will be returning) (Tomoe)

(Thanks. There's something I want to consult about) (Makoto)

Well, this is fine.

"Shiki, the previous order won't go. You two, there's something I want to ask you" (Makoto)

Right now, it smells like an emergency situation.

Not for the company, but an emergency situation for the town itself. In other words, it is a crisis for everyone except us.

This is probably quite the chance for us.

There's the saying 'burglars in fires', and this is exactly the fire.
<As in, burglars appear in chaos>

Everyone is restless and being attacked by the menace called monsters.

I wasn't the one who caused it, so the inhumane example of arson to steal is not that accurate though.

There's absolutely no need for me to hurry.

Because we can get through rough directions after all.

Even if it's not to the level of theft, I can move in a way where I can take advantage of the situation.

Luckily…

The surroundings are getting spacious.

Because everyone has noticed the abnormality and has escaped from the stage one after the other.

Truly a panic.

If I just deal with the thing that was Ilumgand, this place will turn in a pretty safe place. Well, we are the minority in here though.

Even so, in this kind of situation, Rembrandt-san will probably be

looking for me.

I did tell him my seat number, so he should know my approximate location. Depending on the content of the meeting, it could be dangerous.

“Ah, Tomoe. Sorry for changing my opinion. There’s something I want to consult you three. This situation, what do you think we should do? For Kuzunoha Company and us, which action should be the most beneficial? Shiki, what’s your take?” (Makoto)

After waiting for Tomoe’s return, I ask the opinion of Shiki.

The one that knows the most about Rotsgard and Kuzunoha Company is Shiki after all.

“How should we move, is it? Eva and Ruria are here, so I think the first thing we should do is make this place safe. In terms of benefiting the company, I think there’s the option of only moving the minimum possible. Just when needed” (Shiki)

“So, don’t act?” (Makoto)

Eva and Ruria seem to feel relief after hearing Shiki’s words.

About those girls, I don’t mind what they hear from us.

I have established an agreement with those two after all.

Of course, it is not a pact made with magic, but more of a promise.

I have also told them that they should prepare for the consequences if they were to break it.

Those two are free to interpret it in any way they want, but I don’t think they are taking it too lightly.

“Yes. Including the demands of the merchants and several other factors, the more damage this incident causes, the more time it will take for it to happen. I don’t have any guarantees of how well it will go, but there’s the chance that several companies will disappear. No matter which, I think that it benefits us better than suppressing the

turmoil promptly and showing our power. If we take the initiative imprudently, the guilds that were in cahoots for trying to bring us down and the major companies might treat us as their private army, and just like how the representative clamored, they might really demand for the 90% of our profits, and to share our transportation method" (Shiki)

I see.

Even if I move through my current emotions of Rona and bring down her plans, it won't benefit us huh. The thing about keeping the demon lord in check certainly is a dangerous thought.

I still don't know how the guild would act after all.

I can clearly see that it will not turn into anything good, so that's why I am here thinking about struggling but…

"Tomoe, what do you think?" (Makoto)

"Right…" (Tomoe)

Tomoe looks like she is pondering.

I thought she would agree with what Shiki said.

These two are the same in the part that they both look at the advantages and disadvantages after all.

"There's also the choice of suppressing this turmoil anyways. Like a hero of justice" (Tomoe)

"What do you mean?" (Makoto)

A hero of justice you say.

The bad habit of Tomoe came out again?

"It may come with the demerit that the merchants will see our fighting power, but by respecting the hyuman life and not requesting for a reward, not only the store, we would be able to turn the people in this town to our side. No matter how much they

try to bite us, if the residents treat us as heroes, they would need the resolve to attack us. Protecting the residents can actually become a wall that protects us from ill will" (Tomoe)

To act the part huh. In that case, it would be indispensable to resolve this in an early stage.

"Then it would be bad if we don't move as soon as possible, right?" (Makoto)

"No, it's still too soon. The best time is when there's a considerable amount of damage and the residents are falling into despair. The direction is important in the play after all. If we just close the lid after 5 minutes, the gratitude would diminish" (Tomoe)

I tried pointing out this suggestion and see, but it seems she had a different opinion.

… I see.

It is true that a hero of justice, instead of coming before the person is attacked, they come after the person has already been attacked and is already in a pinch. If they were to come before the problem occurs, no one would be grateful towards them.

Tomoe is saying that we should aim for that gratitude.

I see. It is better for them to be in a pinch.

In that case, there's still plenty of time.

Should I wait for a certain percent of the town to be destroyed, or when the defensive forces of the town clash with the monsters? I feel like that might give quite the impact.

Just that, there's also the possibility that they will hate us for not coming out faster.

If we don't place a good reason, it might become a double-edged sword.

"Mio, do you have an opinion?" (Makoto)

Honestly, I didn't expect much when asking her.

She sometimes shows impressive intuitions, but in basis, she is a person that's more instinct less thinking.

"How about using this chance to kill every hindrance? If it's now, we can use the chaos to bring down every problematic one. It may bring suspicions if only the merchants interfering with Waka-sama are brought down, but if we kill a decent amount of them, we can cover it up-desu wa" (Mio)

Slaughter everyone that's a hindrance. She is saying that we should kill everyone that's close as well huh.

What a straight opinion.

It certainly does have an immediate effect. Just that, this method is more like cutting the weed and leaving the root, so I feel like it won't resolve the main issue.

This opinion of mine is probably stemming out of my impression from that representative, but I feel like merchants are stubborn towards people that are successful, so even if we take care of the bunch that are bothering us, I don't think that would be the end of it.

When thinking that way, I can tell how scarce of an existence Rembrandt-san is.

And I don't know how he was in the past.

"Well then, what does Waka think? If you stopped the order from a while ago, you must have a guideline already, even if it's vague" (Tomoe)

Tomoe turns the question to me now.

True, I do have something in mind that's slightly different from the order I gave a while ago.

"… Well, yeah. One is that the even if we don't do anything, the matter will resolve itself; the other one is how it will affect the

future demon lord meeting if I were to save Academy Town” (Makoto)

“Hoh~, a meeting with the demon lord. No matter the form, if you plan on meeting with the Lord of the demon race, suppressing this situation would be a minus” (Tomoe)

It’s just as Tomoe said.

It will obviously not turn into a plus.

Or more like, I have already told you that before so you should know.

Tomoe sometimes schemes things, who knows what she is thinking.

In her answer just now, she might have done it just to increase the amount of options.

Shiki and Mio also gave out different options after all.

Well, right now is not the time to guess the real intentions of Tomoe.

I did feel like negotiating with the demons because they haven’t shown any direct antagonism towards us, and if we were to move now, it might turn the negotiations with them into nothing.

I have ended up defeating a few demons in the wasteland, but no one knows about that event.

What I know is that there were demons that were trying to use Tomoe.

“I at least want the area that Tomoe pointed out, Kaleneon. It is in such an inside part and it isn’t that vast either, moreover, from what Eva-san said, it was a place that didn’t have anything special and it wasn’t as if it was prosperous in resources either. It seems there were also many uncivilized places around the area, so in terms of future worth, I don’t think it is worth much to the demon race. I think it won’t be that hard of a negotiation. But, if it’s a negotiation with a hyuman that has destroyed their plan, I feel like

it might become harder to ask for something or to get something. It might even turn into being unable to meet" (Makoto)

"Your guess about Kaleneon is probably right. The castle they were re-utilizing didn't have that many soldiers, and they weren't in alert mode. Instead of a military position, it felt more like a base to advance the cultivation of new lands" (Tomoe)

The words of Tomoe make the eyes of Eva and Ruria open wide.

Well, of course they will react like that.

Because Tomoe is talking as if she has seen Kaleneon already.

If it were from a hyuman, this is something hard to believe.

Kaleneon is in a pretty deep part of the demon's territory, so there's no one who knows its current state.

And that truth also served as the trigger for the foolish thing I thought of. <Something he thought of before all this happened>

"If we suppress the situation in Academy Town, no matter how well we resolve it, Rona will probably suspect that it was our deed. This would be the case if we were to follow Tomoe and Shiki's suggestion. And, in the case we use Mio's suggestion, we would have to totally migrate to the demon race side or there's the chance it would cause trouble for the store in Rotsgard and Tsige, and also to the people related to me. Well that's the worst case scenario where we don't do anything to resolve the situation, moreover, they discover our connection with the demon race though" (Makoto)

The things to consider were steadily extending and it is becoming more difficult to predict the developments. I could tell that my mind was falling into disorder.

But I can still think of things roughly while arranging it.

I don't want to get talked down like yesterday anymore, so I have to do my best.

Endure, endure.

I can easily reach to a conclusion when alone, and yet, when other people mix in and give out their thoughts, it feels like a foreign substance is trying to blend in and it makes it hard to put together.

In the times when I was in the modern world, I didn't have to think about anything this seriously.

Even my future, I was the type that just thought: 'it would be nice if I were able to live by doing only archery'.

"Related to Waka-sama, by that, you mean the Rembrandt Company and the students? Also a few adventurers in Tsige would enter the list as well, right?" (Shiki)

Shiki complements what I said.

In terms of adventurers, Tomoe and Mio are more related to them, but no doubt that it does relate to the Kuzunoha Company.

The only ones I have been directly involved with would be Toa-san and her group.

And my current connection with Lime is more like a connection through Tomoe.

Also, he already knows about Asora, so he is basically on our side.

About Rembrandt-san and the students, what should I do?

From how the representative talked, I think that if I make it as if Rembrandt-san was exploiting me, the criticism from the representative won't be that much.

As long as the whole hyuman race doesn't know that I am in the demon race's side, there shouldn't be that much to worry about.

No, even so, there's no telling what might happen.

In the worst case, there might be the need to take them with me.

About the students, well, they are not my employees or anything like that.

Will they get implicated in this?

Even if it is discovered that a temporary teacher has been communicating with the demon race, instead of the students, it feels like the academy itself would be the one receiving the criticism.

It isn't like I have been using dangerous medicines like that Ilumgand screaming who knows what, and the fruits of Asora underwent examinations beforehand and there were no problems.

… That they weren't able to detect the use of medicine that transforms people into variants brings out questions as well.

Also Jin and the others did show their abilities. Many people witnessed it.

When taking that into account, there shouldn't be anyone who would condemn them.

Thinking about how the hyumans have been until now, there should be more people who would want to shelter them and utilize them right?

I think that even if I don't do anything about the students, they would still be okay.

Thinking about it in loss and gains, their growth may be remarkable, but currently they are still not strong enough to be considerable fighting powers.

In the worst case scenario, I can bring them with me and they will be safe, but nothing good will come out of it.

…

Right.

If I am prioritizing loss and gains, there's no need to be concerned about the students.

Actually, if I am going to the demon race, they are a connection I

will have to cut.

Reeled in by power, the students took my classes and grew, but in all of that, the truth was that the temporary teacher was actually of bad origins. That could turn into a demerit.

That's about it.

But…

If we are talking about that, if I do as Mio suggested, it wouldn't be necessary to continue my relationship with Rembrandt-san either…

Just that, as a human being, I am hesitating.

"Waka, it seems Rembrandt is coming here" (Tomoe)

Rembrandt-san. So he really is coming.

It's true that at first our connection was just because that's how it developed.

But I thought I would follow his steps and become a merchant as well.

Now, I am attached too.

Should I abandon all my connections and start over at the demon's side?

Even if there may not be many, should I treasure the people I have become close to?

My current naivety will get in the way when dealing with people in the future.

Is it okay to wipe everything clean?

I can't brush off this anxiety.

Damn it.

There's no time.

I have to make a decision now.

No, that's also not right.

I can't hurry this.

The surroundings were making an uproar a few moments ago, but it is beginning to calm down.

It's not that it has actually calmed down. It's just that more than half of the audience has escaped already.

First, I will meet with Rembrandt-san and rethink.

Okay.

The Rembrandt couple have found us and hastened their pace. Seeing that, I try to hold down my impatient feelings.

—

Author Note:

Makoto's thoughts are jumbled up.

It may be hard to read, but please do pardon me for that.

Chapter 136: Sending off 4 and 5

To put advantages and disadvantages as priority when thinking is somewhat displeasing.

Honestly speaking, it doesn't fit me.

The times when I was in the wasteland without knowing anything were actually more peaceful.

Right now, even if I try to return to those times, I won't be able to.

If I were skillful enough to act within the things I know and don't, I wouldn't be in this situation where I am troubled.

"Raidou-dono, I have been looking for you! It's great to see that you are safe"

[You two as well. It is not like something has happened here yet, so it isn't that strange though]

"… That's clearly an abnormal state. It seems to still be in the middle of transformation. Raidou-dono is truly calm. It seems there's something occurring in the town as well. Everyone heard about the situation outside, saw that thing and fell into panic" (Rembrandt)

[No, if it's a fighting scenario, I am already used to it that's all. Well, I do have a lot of worries about so many things my store is lacking, so I am not as calm as you think]

"We still don't understand the situation, but does Raidou-dono know something? Since the time my daughters left, they haven't shown themselves again. It makes it hard to move. And that's why I am here but…" (Rembrandt)

It seems Rembrandt-san roughly understands the reason of this panic.

He and his wife don't seem to be that flustered.

Maybe they feel safe because Tomoe and Mio are here?

Or are the skilled merchants able to understand this kind of situations and rationally put it together?

Whichever it is, his calmness is different from mine which is simple composure stemmed from my defense method called violence.

[The most information we have is that, in the town, there's monsters like that appearing and rampaging. Sif-ojosan and Yuno-ojosan seemed to have grouped up with their comrades and are planning on doing something about that former Ilumgand. Shiki heard about this with thought transmission]

"In Raidou-dono's place, all employees know how to use thought transmission right? To be able to have communication in this moments of crisis, how enviable. I see, so my daughters are planning on doing something about that. ?!!! R-Raidou-dono, what do you mean by 'something'?!" (Rembrandt)

Nodding several times, Rembrandt-san slowly digested the contents of my written communication, but in the middle of it, he was taken aback and was clearly beginning to get agitated.

I was surprised that he was so calm in learning his daughters would be fighting, but it seems that wasn't the case.

[They are at that age after all. They probably want to test out their skills]

"T-That's not good… Raidou-dono, that's not good. I am sorry, but can you guys please do something about this? Like… can you skillfully deal with this situation? In the first place, there's no need to test their skills in this kind of situation. Right, I did hear there is a troop-like force that's formed by the Academy for the sake of public order. That's right. From the beginning, it is strange for students to fight" (Rembrandt)

H-He suddenly began to fluster.

While all flustered, he is mumbling on and on.

… His wife also has a face as if thinking of something, but it doesn't look like she is that agitated.

In this kind of moments, the parents normally get pretty protective, but she looks quite calm.

"… Raidou-sama, you are their sensei and you are not panicking about it, so my husband and I are not that worried about our daughters"

Maybe she noticed something from my gaze, she talked to me.

No wait, your husband is totally worried.

Even now he is not showing signs of calming down.

"Also, Raidou-sama's group is here after all. I am certain that the worst case scenario won't occur. Those girls too, they will one day learn that no matter how much power they gain on themselves, there's a reality they can't do anything against. If that day happens to be today, it can't be helped. Actually, I feel happy that you are standing at their side in that moment. Even if this man looks flustered, he is not really"

… Scary.

Or more like, it isn't that she blindly believes in her daughters' possibilities.

'They will one day understand their limits, so it is better to have them feel that frustration' is what she is trying to say?

This wife, she is saying something really Spartan.

At a glance, her body seems to be calm, but when seen closely, her gripped hand was trembling, so she is probably pushing herself.

In the case of this couple, the father is the one specialized in

pampering.

The two of them are girls, so, as a father, being strict to them is difficult, or something like that?

Seeing his wife placing her left hand over her right and putting strength in them, I thought this way.

[I am happy that you are have faith in us. It's not like I can always be by their side, so this time, I will take responsibility and properly protect them. And the married couple, what will you be doing from here on? This place is not that dangerous, so if you don't have any particular business, I suggest that you stay here]

"… I see. Dear, dear!"

"No, worst comes to worst, we can gather the mercenaries of the merchant guild and…" (Rembrandt)

"De-ar!!"

"Uo!! W-What is it, Lisa? Right now I am thinking about how to resolve this situation you see" (Rembrandt)

"Raidou-sama will be looking after this place, so it is safe. And then, this place is safe, but he asked us what we will be doing now" (Lisa)

"W-What? I see. Raidou-dono is going to. Fuh～" (Rembrandt)

What's with that 'fuh～'?

You even brought out the words 'Merchant Guild' that I don't want to hear at this moment.

Also, mercenaries.

I have indeed heard that you can hire mercenaries for cheap in the Guild.

It's cheaper than going around asking every adventurer to help in the goods' transportation, so I have heard many merchants use this method.

It's something that doesn't concern me, so I don't know its details though.

After Rembrandt-san's wife talked to him, it seems he calmed down.

"What should we do? There's the matter of the girls as well, so I think it is a good idea to stay here, what do you think?" (Lisa)

"… No, let's try going to the Guild once" (Rembrandt)

"To the Guild? Didn't we go a few days ago? Also, even if we go now with the current situation, I don't think we can expect a decent reception" (Lisa)

Exactly as she says.

Also, taking into account that I will be on the outlook and I don't mind a few sparks flying to that place, for him to be in the Merchant Guild is not something I would like that much.

"I don't think the Merchant Guild here is that used to this kind of situations. Also, I have experienced several battles in Tsige and have taken command in them. I should be able to help out in reducing the amount of damage" (Rembrandt)

W-What did he say?

Just a few moments ago his mind was completely filled with his daughters, and yet, he suddenly says this.

While I was thinking this, Rembrandt-san turned from his wife to me.

"If this place will be protected by Raidou-dono, I don't need to worry about my daughters at all. Also, it isn't like I don't know the Guild Representative here" (Rembrandt)

"This place's representative… ah, Zara-san. Dear, you went to meet him before right?" (Lisa)

Zara.

That representative, if I remember correctly, he did have that name.

Not only Rembrandt-san, his wife is also an acquaintance of him huh.

Hah～ I still sigh just remembering his face.

“U-Umu. Anyways, if my family is safe, I have to do what I can. There’s no loss in helping out the Merchant Guild, and this is the town my daughters are in. So, Raidou-dono, I will be heading to the Merchant Guild to help settle this panic” (Rembrandt)

“… Can’t be helped. In that case, I will be accompanying you” (Lisa)

“L-Lisa, I don’t mind you staying-” (Rembrandt)

“I will be going. I am more accustomed to rough situations than the people in the Guild here. Also, I would like to give my greetings to Zara-san. It’s been a long while” (Lisa)

For some reason, Rembrandt-san wants to go alone.

Is there some sort of inconvenience if his wife were there?

This is the town his daughters attend to, so in the case of this person, he wouldn’t have any affairs or anything like that.

In the first place, he is head over heels for his wife.

But, those two intent to leave the tournament ground?

What should I do? The choice where I have merits…

….

Ah, geez!

Like hell I will go doing the advantages and disadvantages as priority!

I am already at my limit!

I have a debt of gratitude with them.

I want to protect them.

I want them to be safe.

Then, that's enough for me.

I check my surroundings.

It seems there's still people in the guest seats.

Also, there are still a few people remaining.

In that case, it would be bad to do it 'here'.

"Raidou-dono, sorry but, I am leaving my daughters in your care. If I leave it to you, I have no need to hesitate. I will try to do what I can. Is what I am saying, but I am just going to create favor though, hahaha" (Rembrandt)

"Then, see you later. We will be going now" (Lisa)

[Wait. I will go along with you midway]

There's no assurance that nothing will happen to them if I let just the two of them go.

Let's place an escort.

I don't want the few people I can trust to face danger.

… If I were to enter the demon's side, I will have to help Rembrandt-san from the back, or they might face danger as well.

Well, I will leave that for when I actually have to think about it.

They seemed to be slightly puzzled for a moment, but the married couple accepted to have me accompany them.

I ordered Tomoe to teleport Eva-san and Ruria to the store in thought transmission.

After confirming that Tomoe nods, I leave everyone and follow Rembrandt-san.

Leaving the audience seats, we continue on into a dim passage.

[You two are in good terms with that representative-dono?]

“Good terms… it is a complicated relationship. What I can say for sure is that we have an inseparable relationship” (Rembrandt)

“There was a time when they both looked after their own stores. They were neighbors” (Lisa)

“Lisa!” (Rembrandt)

“Isn’t that fine? It’s not something to hide. Also, you two are like a mass of successfulness, and were similar” (Lisa)

Rembrandt-san was huh.

I can’t imagine it.

And it seems the connection of the representative and Rembrandt-san is deeper than I thought.

At one hand, allies and companions they can rely on.

On the other hand, they are forceful and despise each other.

What a mysterious thing.

[I see. That guy is relentless depending on the person, to an extraordinary level. He gave the image of a merchant-like person, so it is a bit surprising hearing that he is similar to Rembrandt-san]

“… It was yesterday huh. The day you met with him. You did say you were troubled with the business. It seems he said something to you” (Rembrandt)

[I was unaware of my lack of knowledge and the friction in my surroundings]

“I talked to him a bit about you and your followers beforehand

though. It seems it didn't get through him properly. Sorry" (Rembrandt)

[Don't worry. It isn't something you have to apologize for. It was my coping that was lacking after all]

"It is about you Dear, so didn't you say vague things to Zara-san?" (Lisa)

"It is personal information of Raidou-dono after all. I can't just readily give out details, Lisa. Fumu, if it didn't get through him, he must have acted in a very rustic manner" (Rembrandt)

[Sadly, it seems he didn't even treat me as a merchant. It was truly shameful]

"Even when he is like that, he does have a kind part as well, but he is the type that just lacks in vocabulary. There are times when he is misunderstood" (Rembrandt)

Misunderstood?

It wasn't on that level. He went full-blown abuse though?

Well, there's no doubt he didn't expect anything from me, so it is definitely not a misunderstanding.

Rembrandt-san does seem to know him very well.

"He was doing a more likeable business than Dear. You were the type that just came silently from the back and attacked. It's true that his mouth was a big disadvantage for him though" (Lisa)

"Lisa, I feel malice there? Didn't I just skilfully handle the matters?" (Rembrandt)

Skilfully.

As expected, the world of merchants isn't simple.

I was way too lenient.

[You were old acquaintances huh]

“Yeah. Since a long time ago. Morris also knows about Zara well, and they have also competed with each other. I have noticed that in the end, my family is the most important, so I have drawn a line already, but he is still unmarried and has only been living in the world of business. Maybe because of that his sense of smell has grown duller, or it might be because he doesn’t like my shadow, it seems he showed a bad attitude to Raidou-dono” (Rembrandt)

[So that’s how it was. He told me that it was too fast for me to work here, so go back to Tsige and retrain as a merchant]

“Fuh～, he won’t say it that kindly right? ‘Run back and have your colleague look after you’ is more like what he would say. Well, if that’s how you took it that would be great for him” (Rembrandt)

He really does know that guy well.

Honestly, I told Rembrandt-san that he said it in this way, but actually, what I got from that guy’s words were mostly ‘Disappear you boosted rascal’.

“That’s a Zara-like way of saying it. Ara, we are already outside. Raidou-sama, this much is fine, the rest we can go by ourselves. Please do take care of our daughters” (Lisa)

“Umu. Even if I look like this, I do know self-defense. Don’t worry. I will also talk properly with representative Zara” (Rembrandt)

No, it wasn’t like I was complaining or anything.

But well, it must have sounded like a complain to them.

Hah～, I am truly being pampered by Rembrandt-san.

Gotta reflect.

Well then, let’s go to the main task. Summoning a guard.

[Please wait. I thought it would stand out at the previous location, so I accompanied you all this way. But since we are here, I would

like to bring out a guard for you two]

“Guard?”

“Are you referring to one of your followers? But they are all at the previous location”

Without answering the married couple, I create a mist gate.

At a simple glance, it only looked like a body sized haziness, but it appeared at my side.

In there, a shadow appears, and a shape slowly gets clearer.

When two Lizardmen with beautiful scales appear from the mist, the couple gulp.

Surprised that two mamonos suddenly appeared.

It seems they were overwhelmed by their presence and their bearing that one can feel intelligence from.

[As you can see, these are mamonos I have summoned. They possess reliable power, so please bring them along. If by any chance you are attacked, these two will prove to be extraordinarily useful. In public, just say that Rembrandt-san or your wife used some magic tool to summon them]

“N-Now that you mention it, Raidou-dono was able to use summoning magic. I didn’t expect them to appear instantly, so I was really surprised” (Rembrandt)

[They can understand common language, so if you want to give them orders, just saying it normally will work. By the way, the one holding a spear is Blu- I mean, Fia; and the one with a bow is Hyun]

Matching my introduction, both Mist Lizards kneel facing the couple.

It seems that since it is my order, they will follow it.

I’m grateful.

It looks like the couple also grew calmer after seeing how they acted.

“They can understand words huh. That’s reliable. Raidou-sama, thank you very much” (Lisa)

“Yeah. Let me express my gratitude. Thanks” (Rembrandt)

[Please stay safe. Let’s meet later]

I have the Mist Lizard 4 and 5 as bodyguards for the couple.

I plan on having the number 3 work along with the students, so maybe I should place the name like just now.

The two names I gave just now were impromptu, but it is more like code-names so there should be no problem.

Seeing off the couple, I head back to the tournament grounds where the students are probably already fighting in.

Chapter 137: Business and fight

Guys, I know I have said this before, but let me repeat myself here.

I don't mind you dropping this story, but don't go publicizing it. It affects me in negative ways, and I am pretty sure that it isn't doing anything positive to others either, so please just maturely stop reading and don't go around saying it as if it's a threat or something.

"What's happening?"

The fight hasn't started yet.

Even so, on my way, I voiced out a question to no one in particular.

–The situation.

The former Ilumgand has swelled to about twice its original size and has turned into a humanoid shaped thing that shines dimly.

The meat ball-looking body has turned into a somewhat slim one now.

Looks like a badly made giant.

And in his hand, he holds the body of one of his fallen teammates.

The damage is terrible and with only a look I can tell that person is dead.

By looking at the monster's mouth, I can tell what happened to a certain extent.

"That thing moved. When he was having a meal, the students came to stop him. And that's how this situation came to be" (Makoto)

Without any hesitation, it eats people.

I think that the will of Ilumgand is already gone.

He is not making any strange noises. Maybe he was given an order of some sort, or he is just moving by his own instincts of violence? This is still unknown.

Jin and the others are standing on the stage where Ilumgand is and taking a battle stance.

It may be slight, but I can feel hesitation, or more like bewilderment, from everyone there.

They probably felt an emotion similar to fear after seeing Ilumgand eat a teammate, in other words, a comrade that attends the same school.

“Is the Academy not sending out help?” (Makoto)

“They are coming out just now” (Shiki)

Shiki answers me.

After his words, a group of purple clothed people come out from the corridor connecting to the waiting room.

What a taste.

Purple.

The group of around ten, point their staffs at the back of the giant and begin their arias.

Their numbers are few, but maybe they have good skills?

Or is the damage to other places bigger than expected and they can’t circulate that many people?

Let’s entrust Tomoe that aspect.

“Tomoe, I want you to go grasp the damage around the town and report it to me. I don’t mind if it’s an outline only. Can you do it?”

(Makoto)

“Leave it to me” (Tomoe)

The fight begun.

Jin and the others are still in alert mode without participating.

They are waiting and seeing.

It seems those purple guys haven’t suddenly told them to fight, so they are just prioritizing observation.

In the purple group they are all magicians.

They have staffs equipped and they are also doing magic arias, so there should be no mistake.

… Such bad balance.

“Shiki, help out” (Tomoe)

“Understood” (Shiki)

Shiki nods at Tomoe’s no-questions-asked order to assist her.

Shiki’s forte is earth element.

Both wind and earth are good for surveying.

If both of them cooperate, we will be able to confirm the situation in a rather fast fashion.

I sit and rest my chin on one hand.

Looking at the progress of the battle, I once again think of the method I should take.

“Ara ara, magicians getting so close. What are they even thinking?” (Mio)

Mio is blunt about the situation.

The fighting force of the Academy shouldn't be only this.

Honestly speaking, this Academy Town is a land with no battle experience.

There's no fights, so there's even rumors saying that expenses on defense are being placed on other areas.

Even so, they should have the fighting power of a tiger cub at the very least.

Especially in the school festival when powers of different countries visit.

They should have them prepared just in case.

The visitors coming here should have their guards and a bit of fighting power with them to protect themselves.

The problem is if that will be enough.

If that's not enough, we would have to step in for sure.

If we step in, the negotiation with the demon race will be more difficult.

"That's interesting-desu wa. That monster. From the 4 basic elements, he is nullifying 3 of them. For something that's practically a hyuman mix failure, it is pretty well made. Is that a byproduct, or was this an expected effect?" (Mio)

Hmm.

Hearing the words of Mio, I raise my head.

The 4 basic elements huh.

She refers to the earth, water, fire and wind elements.

Most of the spirits are of those elements and the majority uses it, so that's how they are called.

Despite its disgusting outward appearance, it is high spec.

When I look, the purple magicians' side suddenly increased their power.

It was in an instant.

It didn't seem as if they did anything. Is that kind of strengthening possible?

… Ah.

I noticed what it was about.

"The blessing" (Makoto)

"It seems so-desu. But to increase only the firepower is not going to help much in this situation. Because everything is attack magic. And to top it off, there's way too few using the effective element, fire. With that, they will only increase its vigor-desu wa" (Mio)

Mio said so amazed.

The progress of the battle moves as if matching her words.

The magicians released their magic and Ilumgand makes a shattering scream. It didn't sound as if it was weakening. That was a scream that felt as if it was strengthening.

Ilumgand turns unto the purple group and rushed.

He showed quite the instantaneous power.

Well then.

It looks like the turn of my students won't be coming for a while.

So, about the way to use this disturbance.

The success of this (don't know what's the factor that would state the success of it though) should be important to the demon race to a certain extent.

That must be why Rona didn't tell me anything and still went into action.

I want Kaleneon, but I can't overlook this uproar till the end.

In that case, how should I act?

While I absentmindedly~ look at the academy's fighting force get torn up, I get irritated by my thoughts that are not showing signs of arranging.

"Waka, I have a rough grasp of the situation. There seem to be about 50 of those monsters around the whole area. The teleport formations and auxiliary teleport formations are being actively targeted and destroyed . There's a few at the surrounding towns as well, and they show the same pattern. Also, the thought transmission interference, may be weak at the moment, but it looks like it is just the beginning. It may not be visible in Academy Town, but from the surrounding towns, it feels like they are slowly closing the circle" (Tomoe)

Tomoe, that was fast.

And you even grasped the situation on the surrounding towns as well.

What terrifying people.

"I see. And the battle situation?" (Makoto)

"Not good. Maybe they were more accustomed to peace than expected. They haven't been able to defeat a single one yet. It seems they are doing well in holding back one of the monsters that is heading to the Academy's internal teleport formation, but the other places have received a lot of damage" (Shiki)

Ara ra.

I see. They are having it rough.

If it's not only this one but all the ones out there that have this magic negation or whatever it is, it may be a difficult opponent for students and magicians.

It might collapse the notions of the academy.

Well, no surprise.

This place has been nothing but peaceful after all.

Compared to Tsige and the base, this place is practically tensionless.

Hearing Shiki's report, I have understood that the situation will turn bad if we don't join in to suppress it.

"Waka-sama, those guys have been wiped-out-desu wa" (Mio)

Oh.

Mio notifies me about their wipe-out with a sigh mixed in.

For the purple guys to serve as a meal only… just how weak can they be?

"Jin and the others didn't assist?" (Makoto)

"They did, but their way of fighting was no good-desu wa ne. They didn't move like they did in the matches" (Mio)

How unusual.

From the reports I have received from Eris, I have heard that they are able to properly move when they fight mamonos.

Can't be helped. It seems they need instructions.

Now that I think about it, when I was pushed into actual site training by Sensei, I was clumsy until I got used to it.

They are students as well. Even if their body doesn't move as they want to, there's nothing to be embarrassed about.

Well, it would be no good if they end up dying because of that, but right now I am here with them.

"Geez. My evaluation of them had gone a bit higher, and soon after, they show such a sad behavior" (Mio)

Uh, it feels like I am the one receiving those words.

“Shiki, didn’t you pamper them way too much? To use your forte element in only one kind of way, that’s the pattern of hyumans. You should properly teach them how to have a wider field of vision like the time they were fighting in the team battles” (Mio)

How strict Mio.

Why is it? I feel like all her scolding is stabbing at me.

Ah, I am the type that can only do one thing.

Also, I am the type that misses whenever I am under pressure.

I can do this kind of fights easily, but when it comes to negotiations and business, I immediately show my true self… Mh?

“… Eh?”

Use your forte with a wider field of vision…

My forte…

Magic power and defense. Also, the speaking ability. <Probably means his ability to speak with other races>

I have used my speaking ability to make it shine in different aspects, but what about my fighting power?

I hate threatening with brute strength so I don’t do it, but aren’t there many other ways to use it aside from that?

In business, at work, in dignified things, I thought I had to do it fair and square.

In basis, it hasn’t changed even now, and that’s why I haven’t gone for the power-type of merchandize.

Because if I were to put fighting power as merchandize, what’s optimum for us would be to turn into a mercenary group. We are already using Asora, so that system would be way too much of an advantage for the merchants.

To exchange lives for money feels slightly wrong for me, so that's mostly the reason why I don't do it but…

Then, what would be fair and square?

I feel like something meshes here…

Violence is also one of the cards I hold.

No, I wouldn't be actively threatening.

But to be concerned about something that I wouldn't be using constantly is… pointless?

If our surroundings get even if only an impression that we are a group that possesses diverse abilities aside from business, they will obviously see us as a threat.

Using the backing of the country, they place pressure on other merchants.

They use the position they have built up as an advantage against newcomers.

I do think that that's an obvious business technique.

Then, to put your assets to a different use, isn't that something similar?

Personal connections, assets, power; that's the power of those guys.

To use your all to challenge something isn't strange.

Isn't it even stranger to exclude strength?

It is true that it might not be good for your image, but there's other ways of using strength aside from hurting someone.

Right. For example: in a situation where there's a threat that uses the same strength to cause damage?

I look at the guest seats.

I still see quite a few people there.

The academy head is probably there as well, using thought transmission to relay orders.

Seeing his own fighting force defeated so easily must have affected his spirit.

… Yeah.

Let's try it out.

"Waka-sama, what's wrong? Looks like your students are going to be fighting" (Mio)

"… Mio, and also Shiki. Please give instructions to Jin and the others. If they are about to be wiped-out, assisting them is also fine" (Makoto)

"Eh?"

"Hah?"

"N, you didn't hear me?" (Makoto)

"No, that's not it! Understood!" (Mio)

"Your orders have been received. I will instruct them to my best and have them gain experience" (Shiki)

I ask them again and Mio and Shiki run forward.

After reaching the inner part of the audience seats where the railing is, they jump down to the center of the tournament grounds, onto the stage.

There's also the promise I made with Rembrandt-san.

I will not let a single one of my students die.

Also, just like his wife said: 'Experiencing the feeling of being

almost killed will surely serve them well in the future'.

Not like the surprise attack of the low-grade dragon. There's surely a different meaning in fighting an upfront fight.

Well, since the time I came to this world, fights were mostly easy for me, so I am not in a position to say that though.

"Tomoe, come with me" (Makoto)

"As you will. It seems you have decided on what to do" (Tomoe)

"Yeah. For now, I will protect this town behind-the-scenes. Please have Lime and Mondo move. It is fine to have them rescue the residents. If the situation has not subsided after that, you can freely decide to suppress it. And while at it, capture one or two as samples and send them to Asora. I will leave the details of the orders to you" (Makoto)

"Let me confirm this, it is fine for me to enter the scene whenever I find it appropriate?" (Tomoe)

"Yeah, I leave it to you. I will give you the details after this place is fully under control" (Makoto)

"As you will. And then, where are we going now?" (Tomoe)

"We are going to help the people that are at the guest side. In this part, we will act as heroes of justice" (Makoto)

"… I see. You are not going for the residents, but for the people that have posts in the countries" (Tomoe)

"… I will leave that to your imagination" (Makoto)

Tomoe probably knows everything I am thinking of.

If I want the guests to escape to a safe place, having Tomoe would be the best choice.

I am a merchant, and she is my escort and close aide.

If I want them to look at Kuzunoha Company, it is easier to show them Tomoe and Mio.

My thinking is still shallow, but Tomoe abides to it.

It may be rough, but I am grateful.

My thinking is simple.

Carrot and stick.

Aid and intimidate.

The thing that's fine for us to do when utilizing strength.

I have begun to think that the things we can do are actually many.

I feel like my field of vision has increased in an instant.

It may be rude to use the guests that are probably scared as my first testers.

Doing something like this, will it leave a good impression?

It is indeed an extremely simple idea.

I head to the guest seats with feelings as if challenging a test after studying all night.

Chapter 138: Guest's rescue

"Excuse me"

A clear voice resounds in the guest area that is being controlled by bewilderment.

There's a carpet spread out and seats lined up. A room that divides it from the general seats.

So this is the guest seats huh.

Tomoe's voice resounds well. It probably gathered the attention of all the countries' big-shots onto her.

There were some gazes my way too though.

"Who are you guys?! Don't you know that this area is off limits?!"

A face that I have seen in portraits shouts at us.

Ah, this guy is the academy's principal.

I never know where he was, and of course, I have never met him before, so I couldn't tell it was him immediately.

"Please do forgive us in this emergency situation. It seems you guests haven't evacuated to a safe place, so it may be out of our way, but we thought we should lend our assistance" (Tomoe)

Tomoe didn't show any sign of being angered and tells the academy principal her business.

At that moment, I noticed that there was a girl that send her gaze to Tomoe.

From what I can tell, she looks like a girl with social status.

She looks young, so maybe the next generation head of some noble family? Or maybe a princess of somewhere?

N, princess?

I feel like Tomoe might know something…

…

Could it be, this woman is the Gritonia Empire's princess, Lily?

If it's really, then she is quite the big-shot.

But it seems she is traveling with the hero, so it would be strange for her to be here.

There's the chance that she is not her huh.

I felt like there was a familiar gaze on me and when I turned to check who it was, I see a silver haired young man leaning his back on a wall with arms crossed.

Don't know what's so fun, but he is smiling, and he unfastens his arms and waves his hand at me.

Its pervert Root.

Right, he was here as well.

Damn it.

Then there was no need to come here to help them?

If he comes talking to me about strange things, it would not be good for me or my company.

But it seems Root doesn't intend to move into action. He crosses his arms again, his wide smile returns to a slight smile, and he silently looks at Tomoe again.

I don't get him.

Is he not worried about the Adventurer Guild?

I do think that that place is also facing danger though?

“First of all, introduce yourself! I don’t know about you”

“Sorry for my lack of manners. I am Tomoe, one of Kuzunoha Company’s employees, Academy Principal. And this person here is my master Raidou. He has an impairment that doesn’t allow him to speak, so I, his follower, am the one who has to introduce him. Please do understand” (Tomoe)

“Tomoe and Raidou huh”

[Pleasure to meet you Academy Principal. I am a temporary teacher working here, Raidou. I considered this an emergency situation so I thought I would help out and so I have come here. Please forgive our rudeness]

“Written communication. I see, it is you. I do remember there’s a temporary teacher named Raidou”

It seems he at least knows that I use written communication, and I also show a plate which serves as a certificate that proves I am a temporary teacher.

Looking at me, the written communication, and the proof; the tone of the Academy Principal softened.

“I am glad you have understood” (Tomoe)

“You said assistance, but what kind of assistance do you intent to provide? In this situation where we only know that there are monsters in town, there’s no way you can guide us to a safe place you know?”

“Academy Principal, you know of several places that are safe right?” (Tomoe)

“Of course, we have already secured a place in times of emergencies. Relaying composed orders and sorting information in a dangerous place is something I would want to avoid”

“Then if you tell us of that place, I will use teleport magic to send

everyone there” (Tomoe)

“… Teleport? Teleport you say?! This amount of people, in a place the magic user hasn’t gone to before?! Impossible. I have never heard of a spell like that!”

For a second, the Academy Principal lets out a dumbfounded voice, but he soon understood the content and splendidly rejected Tomoe’s plan.

There are times I do think we leisurely use thought transmission and teleportation too much.

The teleporting technique is originally an advanced spell and not something one can leisurely use, and in thought transmission there’s the thing about distance and tapping, and it is user-friendly, so it is used in the general populace, but the one we use is practically a completely different thing.

It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to compare the transmission quality to a bad-performance transceiver and a satellite telephone.

“But you know, it is actually possible. Well, it certainly can’t be helped that this is being suspected as a trap. Fumu…” (Tomoe)

That’s why it is troublesome to explain this complicated teleportation though.

Tomoe doesn’t really look like she is troubled.

Maybe she has a method to convince them.

The only thing I thought of is having one person test it to show it works.

Well, having that one person cooperate will be the troublesome part though.

They are all big-shots after all.

Is there anyone I know that can help out?

Uhm, excluding the pervert…

“Ahahaha! What an interesting person, Academy Principal. Truly interesting. It’s true that I have never heard of such an excelling magician with such a teleport spell” (Root)

“Falz-dono”

“Person called Tomoe, how about trying it out on me first. Right, can you teleport me to the guest seats around that part there? It is fine if I just picture it in my mind right?” (Root)

Root.

Acting as if he has never met her before, he volunteered as a test subject.

Tomoe probably knew this would happen, she didn’t look shaken at all.

Well, even if he is like that, he is still the Adventurer Guild’s Master.

He must have a decent amount of trust.

“Your name is Falz-dono right? Then, please enter inside this mist” (Tomoe)

“Heh~, the other side also has mist appearing huh. Well then, let’s try it out and see if such a convenient spell actually exists” (Root)

In the place where Root pointed out with his finger, there’s also mist appearing. And while still playing the fool, he disappears into the mist, and at the next instant, he comes out from the place he pointed out.

He then turns his head towards the guest seats and waves his hand.

Tomoe glanced at the princess(?) who has her hands on her mouth and her eyes wide open.

Looks like she is quite surprised.

Root walks through the mist on that side and returned.

“Amazing, that’s quite a significant feat! This is the first time I have seen such a great spell! From what I see, that was a power created from the sword hanging at your waist, right?” (Root)

What kind of crazy thing is he saying?

What Tomoe used was teleportation.

It comes normally from herself.

He should also know about the application of our space teleportation.

I really don’t know what he is thinking.

“You got me. Falz-dono has quite the scary eyes there. That’s right, this is the special power of this sword. No need for aria and it allows for a point to point teleportation” (Tomoe)

… Hm?

Tomoe is following?

But unrelated to my confusion, Tomoe and Root were looking at each other and grinned slightly.

Why?

Of course, everyone’s gaze gathered at Tomoe’s sword simultaneously.

To the shorter katana that she pointed out.

Oh.

I notice that there are other faces I know.

The priest and Lorel’s… Sairitz-san, was it?

So they also came to spectate the tournament.

There were several more important-looking people than priest-san at his side, so it took me some time to notice him.

The priest-san is one of the highest positions in the Rotsgard church, so that means, the people there are even higher than that. They might even be from the main church of Limia.

I took time to notice the Lorel people simple because they were at a corner.

Sairitz-san is there too, but there are also many others there as well.

Most of them have darkish skin.

Are the people there mostly of that skin color?

Maybe she noticed my gaze, Sairitz-san made a smile for a second.

She soon returned her interest to Tomoe's sword though.

"I can't believe it"

The Academy Principal was at a complete loss for words.

Teleportation in itself is an extremely advanced technique, and just the fact of being able to use it, you would be admired.

That's why, in order to make this advanced technique as easy to do as possible, they recreate the teleport formation accurately, and there's also support formations that reduce the burden.

And to be told that this action can be done with the power of a sword, moreover, allowing you to teleport to a specific location; there's no surprise that they wouldn't believe it.

Well, for the common sense of this academy, it is something they wouldn't even think it exists.

And this is also proof that this is not something common.

The influential people that come from several countries are all concentrating their eyes on that sword.

Hope this doesn't become a new spark.

"How is it, everyone? Since they went through the trouble of coming to help us, how about relying on them?" (Root)

Root looks at everyone and proposes this idea.

It seems he will incite them for us.

I don't know if this guy is an enemy or an ally, but it seems that in this moment at least, he will act as our ally.

"… Right. It is just as Falz-dono said. Raidou-dono, I thank you for your courageous action, and I promise I will definitely repay you for it. On the name of Gritonia Empire's Lily. What about the others?" (Lily)

Gritonia's Lily.

So she really is the princess.

She even came for the school festival, impressive.

Maybe she also attended this academy?

I feel like she glanced at Tomoe for an instant, but I don't know her intentions.

From what I have heard of Tomoe, they don't have that deep of a connection and just parted at that point in time.

With Lily's words as the impetus, several 'me too' 'me too' were raised and more people decide take our helping hand.

People are willing to.

The people related to the Church, the Lorel Union, and also the nobles that seem to be from Aion. The Academy principal, who is being shouldered by a woman that looks like his secretary, also agreed with it.

Or more like, old man, why did your legs weaken to the point of

needing someone to lend you a shoulder?

Isn't that sexual harassment?

"The people there as well, please decide quickly" (Tomoe)

Tomoe hurries the remaining 5, but they didn't show signs of moving.

What's going on?

I don't think there's significance for a guest to be staying here though.

"… This one is fine here. I have the duty to overlook this"

This one? <余. A super formal way of saying 'I'>

Is he a king?

Duty to overlook he says. He is looking at the stage.

The fight between the students and the monster huh.

"Father, that is…"

"You all, return"

"King, we can't do that. The one standing on that stage is my child after all"

… That's the Limia group.

Ilumgand's father, the Limia King, and he said 'father' so maybe the prince?

Judging from the bearings of the remaining 2, they are probably knights.

So they are a totally related party huh.

What to do?

I think the best choice would be to shelter the other people first.

“Waka, I will be bringing the people here to the safe place that the Academy Principal is thinking of” (Tomoe)

I was about to give the orders to Tomoe and looked at her, but she was one step ahead of me.

Of course, that’s what I wanted her to do, so I nod.

A mist a lot bigger than the one Root crossed appears.

It looks like haze, but it has a thickness that makes you unable to see the other side.

It does make one think that this is a product of magic.

“Well then, I will place this katana under Waka’s care. I leave the matters here to you” (Tomoe)

“?!”

Oi.

What do you plan by leaving me the short katana?

I instinctively take the short sword that was given to me and look at Tomoe.

With a suggestive smile, she disappears into the mist.

Damn it.

Uhm, so I should convince the others from Limia?

But I don’t know the etiquette when talking to a king.

… Should I apologize first before going for the persuasion?

[This is the first time I have met with a person as great as you king, so I might come off as rude. Please do forgive me if that happens]

“You said your name was Raidou, right? Your written

communication is skillful. And your magic should be as well" (King)

[Yes. I can't speak common language, so I am using written communication in this way. Once again, I am the one in charge of Kuzunoha Company, Raidou]

"I know" (King)

[Hm? Do you mean, you know about my store as well?]

Why does someone like the Limia King have information of a small store in Rotsgard like mine?

"Right, Hopelace?" (King)

"?!!"

"If I remember correctly, the company that you were investigating about was the Kuzunoha Company, and about a temporary teacher named Raidou, right?" (King)

"This is a fact we have already confirmed, Hopelace-dono" (Prince)

What?

It seems there's a completely different development going on now.

The thin person that's probably the prince complements the words of the king and shoots them at Hopelace.

I see, Hopelace.

That means the various things Ilumgand did have already been exposed huh.

"I want an explanation Hopelace. Regarding your second son, Ilumgand, that has transformed, and about the calamity that's occurring in the whole Academy Town" (King)

"… King, it is true that I listened to my son's request and investigated about this teacher. I have also used money to bend the rules in this tournament. However, this situation was definitely not

carried out by me. Ilumgand is my son, and he is an important son that might become the head of the family in this warring times. To turn him into that kind of… that kind of monster to plot something, I would never do it!!”

“… Then, why did Ilumgand take an interest in Raidou?” (King)

“… I don’t know. I really don’t know anything!”

I actually wanted to know that too.

Why was I hated so much to the point of being investigated and being declared war?

I only covered for Ruria. Is that something he would get so tenacious about?

Or was he the type that can’t tolerate disgrace?

I am not a noble, so it is hard for me to completely understand their thought patterns.

The Hopelace head repeats his apology to the king over and over again.

“I will hear about it in detail after we have gotten through this situation and return to our country. But the shame you have made us bear on the many nations, won’t come cheap” (King)

“Uh…”

“And so, Raidou, you are a merchant right? And a temporary teacher in this academy that teaches practical skills. Are the students fighting there your students?” (King)

[Yes, there’s no mistake. Those are the students taking my class. Just that, they haven’t been attending it for that long of a time]

“Hoh~. How long has it been?” (King)

[Less than half a year]

“Half a year… were those kids that strong since then?” (King)

[No. I began my business in Tsige, so I have seen the fighting of the adventurers there. I taught them a part of it, and it seems it fit them well, they have been increasing their skills]

So the Limia King has also taken an interest in them huh.

Still facing the stage, he continues our conversation.

“Tsige huh. Certainly. The adventurers hero-dono brought from there had a fighting similar to this one. It seems it is not a lie” (King)

Adventurers from Tsige in Limia?

Heh～

In that case, the current Limia has quite the high leveled adventurers there.

If the people that the hero recruited were people with the skills to enter and leave the wasteland at will, they will become quite the war potential for Limia.

Hero.

I didn’t enquire any specifics, but she came to a remote place like Tsige huh.

Thinking about it in a logical manner, the reason she went there would be for training, maybe?

[King-sama, please come with me to a safe place. There’s no assurance that this place won’t be attacked by other enemies]

“If I have the teacher of those splendid students at my side, I don’t have much to worry about. By the way, Raidou, you can use that sword?” (King)

The Limia King looks at the short katana I hold.

The made-up story about being able to use teleportation with it huh.

Tomoe, it is turning into something troublesome you know?

[Yes, I can. If it's me or Tomoe who was here a while ago, it can be used]

"Then can you bring me to that place? If Ilumgand sees me and his father, he might return to his senses" (King)

"King, that's not good. It's way too dangerous" (Prince)

"A noble of Limia is causing damage to the Academy. I have to provide my assistance to control this situation as well, or I won't be able to stand upright. Isn't that right, Hopelace?" (King)

Rejecting the words of the prince, the King looks at Hopelace.

He reacts with a jolt, and makes a small nod.

He probably doesn't want to face his transformed son.

"Of course, placing oneself in danger is not assistance, but showing that you are willing to is necessary sometimes. If the ones who have to do so are me and Hopelace, then it can't be helped. A quite blunt and unnatural thing to do, if I do say so myself" (King)

"… Raidou-dono, can you teleport us over there?" (Prince)

It seems the prince folded.

Well, I don't really mind though.

Then, I will be acting as the bodyguard of this people for a while?

[It is possible. Well then, all five, is it okay to teleport you around that seat over there?]

Saying so, I point to an estimated area.

The prince nods.

The knights stay silent.

Probably means that they will just silently obey. It must be tough for them as well.

Well, if they carry this out safely, they should gain big points for it.

At that place there's Shiki and Mio.

I put up the short katana.

Gotta show the act at the very least.

I create mist that is not that different from the one Tomoe made.

Mist is created at the pointed out place as well.

Preparations complete.

"I will definitely repay you, Raidou" (King)

The Limia King talks to me.

It would be weird to part from my katana at this moment, so I just lower my head.

In my left hand I have the scabbard and in my right the katana. It was pretty unshapely.

Knight, Hopelace, Prince, and then the King; in order, they disappear inside the mist.

Chapter 139: In front of the variant

“Will it really go well?”

In a small voice, I voiced out my surprise at the situation that was proceeding in a favorable manner.

In foreign problems, I would use power to force the situation into an advantageous direction for me and resolve it.

Even when I decided to do it, I still felt opposition.

Because you know, the war potential we have may not be in a country scale, but it is totally outside the boundaries of what one small-scale company has.

I feel like we would be able to eliminate a mercenary group, and even if we are faced with an army, in the worst case, we could manage to escape.

Tomoe, Mio and, depending on the situation, Shiki as well, are existences that can be called a one-man army.

If we used surprise attacks, I feel like we would be able to overwhelm a certain amount of troops.

Truly the definition of being a match for a thousand.

Gathering all our forces, we wouldn’t even surpass the thousand. This may sound like self-praise, but the races in Asora are quite strong.

Counting them as part of our power, I will move them as a company.

As long as nothing extreme happens, I feel like we won’t fail.

Now that I think about it, training the Forest Onis and having them sell medicine in the villages around the mountains was possible because they have been trained in the military arts and made them follow a pathless course.

I didn't find that strange at all, and yet, I am facing away from my own power. It is truly a contradicting story.

That's why even if I have opposition towards it, I get used to it.

This is not Japan.

I feel like this will become my number one excuse inside me.

I turn my eyes towards the spectator seats.

There, the Limia group is looking at the fight on the stage.

With this, just by providing them safety, I will be able to create a debt towards the people that have a high-standing in the countries.

There's the chance that I will be able to turn the pressure of the people who complained and stood behind the guild, against them.

A smile naturally appears from my mouth.

"Well then, I should get going as well" (Makoto)

I pass through the mist towards the place they are.

Even so, why did Tomoe leave the short katana with me?

Well, it does help as a sub-weapon when using a long sword, and there are times when it can be used as a throwing weapon as well but… even so, thinking about it in terms of etiquette, it would be better to not leave a short sword to someone else.

I look at the katana that for some reason has been made as a weapon with the ability to teleport.

It felt like Root was also conspiring with her, so there must be some reason behind it.

It might be to hide the power of teleportation, but with how it flowed, just by changing the target of the power from Tomoe to the short katana, it won't hide the reality of it.

Just why did those two change the teleportation power from person to object?

I still don't understand it yet.

With that fuzziness inside of me, I look at the short katana in my hands.

Could it be, she still doesn't know the meaning of having two swords as a samurai? <A samurai holds 2 swords, a long and a short one. The short one is for suicide, or what's originally called, seppuku>

After I calm down a bit, let's try talking about this.

If they are doing this knowingly, I won't say much about it.

If the meaning of it is different from my own thinking, that's fine too.

If she told me that it was just a trifle of hers, I can't do much about it. I will just let her do as she wishes.

Trying to probe into it could lead into her just telling me that's just her hobby, so if she herself is having fun with it, that's for the best.

[Sorry for the wait]

"Don't worry, that was a splendid teleportation. Our country prides in being the hyuman race's number one in teleportation technique, but this is my first time seeing this kind of point-to-point spell. I would like to take some time after this to hear about it in detail, but right now I have to overlook that fight. No matter the result" (King)

"…"

Since I was pondering, I arrived a bit late, so I apologized to the Limia King.

I did think that there was no room to worry about it, and as expected, he easily let it go.

It seems the King is already prepared for anything that happens to the Ilumgand variant.

The Hopelace Head trembled at the words of the king and bit his lips though. Considering the situation, I am somehow aware of Ilumgand's fate already.

It is the variant that even Shiki said would be hard to turn back to normal.

The chance of them returning Ilumgand to normal with their limited hyuman knowledge is incredibly low.

"I can't feel a will anymore. He is really rampaging like a mamono" (Prince)

Hm.

The prince huh.

I could feel pity from his words.

Royalty and a high noble.

Both of them probably knew each other, so it can't be helped.

"… Raidou"

The Hopelace Head suddenly talks to me.

In those eyes, he showed clear hostility.

I didn't do much to his son though.

I was only stopping bullying after all.

When I meet with the people of Limia again, there's also the choice of talking and clearing the misunderstanding.

Well, it will all depend if he is willing to, so I don't know if it will

be possible.

[What is it?]

“I heard that your store handles a high number of medicines”

Or more like, you investigated it.

[Yes, most of my merchandize is medicine]

“Is there no elixir in there that can turn my son back?”

[Sorry, but this is my first time seeing such a transformation as well, so the chances of my medicine curing him is low. With just a glance, I can tell that it is using the hyuman body as a catalyst and it seems to be quite the complex spell formula. To return him to normal, it would be as hard as returning a dish back to ingredients]

Using Shiki’s words as reference, I give a response.

“!!”

Hopelace didn’t say any words, but his face showed several different emotions creating a complex expression.

Anger, sorrow, regret… Obviously, I couldn’t see any positive emotions in it.

Witnessing his son about to be defeated, as a father, it is a given that he would feel that way though.

“What a splendid way of fighting. They are able to properly fight against Ilumgand, who was easily able to defeat the Purple Coats that are boasted by the Academy as being able to use all elements” (King)

I think using all elements and dividing the elements between all are two completely different things though.

“But it looks like they are having a hard time. As expected, maybe this was too much for students” (Prince)

The King and the Prince are looking at the fight in a relatively calm manner.

“Raidou, the two there giving out instructions, are they related to you?” (King)

The Limia King sharply notices Mio and Shiki.

[Yes. One of them is helping me out in my classes, his name is Shiki. The other one serves mostly as my bodyguard, Mio. Both of them are employees that have been with me since long ago and I rely on them]

“It seems they are not fighting though?” (King)

[I wanted the students to fight themselves. If the situation turns bad, I told them to back the students up, but in basis, I am having them give instructions in the fight. Also-]

“My son is not a stepping stone for your students!!”

The sudden shout at my side made me stop my words.

I thought he would come saying that, so I was about to give an explanation. How hasty.

[Also, since they were students learning in the same academy, I had a small hope that maybe they would be able to return Ilumgand-sama back to his sense. It seems for some reason that person hates me, so I thought that if our company people stood on the stage, the hope would grow dimmer]

“Kugh!!”

Hopelace, who was lining up the next complain, shuts up after my excuse.

These were words I originally thought of if I was asked by people like the Limia King or the Academy Principal, but I suppose it is okay to have him hear as well.

“Hoh～, you were that thoughtful towards a noble of our country.

That consideration makes me happy. Right, Hopelace?" (King)

At the latter half, the harsh eyes of the King turn towards Hopelace.

I can feel that his aim is to have Hopelace apologize.

No well, there's no real need to.

[It is just a plan where I am leaving it to the hands of my students. There's no need to thank me for it]

While getting the better of the trembling Hopelace, I turn to the king and lower my head.

Also, from what I see, Jin and the others have no leeway to worry about anything.

"At any rate, it is going back and forth. I can't see who would win" (Prince)

The prince speaks.

"Joshua, you can't tell either huh" (King)

"Yeah, but I don't understand something. Why are they only using fire element? Also, for all of them to be able to use the fire element is strange" (Prince)

Looks like they don't have much knowledge regarding that area.

The specialty of the royalty and the nobles is, as expected, politics after all huh.

"Fumu. Raidou, can you explain this? If you are able to, please" (King)

But is it okay for me to be answering this?

There are two knights there after all.

Shouldn't he ask them their opinion first?

Leaving aside the part about the fire element, the knights should

have their own opinions about Ilumgand.

“Raidou, I don’t mind. Please explain” (King)

Thinking that, I turned my eyes towards the knights. Maybe the King understood what I was thinking, he ordered again.

[As you can see, Ilumgand-sama has transformed into that giant body. And well, mainly because the battle has gone for a long period of time, I can tell that the variant’s characteristic is mostly in the magic factor]

“Magic huh” (King)

[Yes. The current Ilumgand-sama possesses a firm resistance towards earth, water and wind; all elements except fire]

Detailed explanations of absorption, resistance, and nullification; in this case, let’s just not do it.

“To three elements you say” (King)

[Luckily, the students there are all trained to use several elements, so they are able to fight him with the only element that is effective against him. I think non-elemental magic will also work, but the efficacy gained compared to the consumption of magic power is bad, so I think their decision was proper]

“Everyone… is able to use several elements? Then you are having them learn elements other than the one they were born with?” (Prince)

When the prince talks in a courteous manner, instead of a prince, he sounds more like a butler.

I am a part of the lower class, so I think he should be acting like the other high-class people.

[Yes, that’s why they are able to provide a decent fight]

“Then why can’t they push him back?” (Prince)

[I think the main reason would be that the element restriction is limiting their options. The fire element originally possesses few restraining skills, and it is more suited for attack and self-enhancement. On top of that, Ilumgand-sama is absorbing the magic power of his teammates and the hyumans around. Because his maximum magic power is increasing, the debuffing magic is not working at all. Moreover, his wounds are regenerating to a certain degree, so if they don't finish it with a big attack, there's the danger of prolonging the fight]

While I was doing the explanation, the Hopelace Head suddenly makes a bitter voice.

I look at the stage.

I didn't see it, but it seems they have dealt a big attack.

His arms are torn off from the shoulder down, and the giant is on his knees.

Arms?

Are they still fighting in order to incapacitate him instead of defeating him?

Looks like Mio decided that she gave enough advice, she is just looking at the fight without participating.

Shiki seems to be preparing for healing just in case and watching the progress of the battle.

Looks like the seven are quite fatigued. To the point that I am able to see it even from where I am.

From what I can tell, they are in a level where it is already hard for them to aim for incapacitation.

[Looks like the battle has progressed slightly. Though, it seems like their voice doesn't reach him, and they don't have the resolve to bring him down]

In terms of stamina, Ilumgand is the one in advantage.

Also…

While I was thinking about something that was bothering me, the thing I was anxious about happened.

The regeneration of Ilumgand's arms.

Aaah~

This will probably break their spirit.

"What, the arms he lost are!"

"Regenerating…"

"Ilum…"

Hm?

Before Jin and the others got shaken by the situation, one of the people there took the initiative and rushed with sword in hand.

Misura.

Is he eager because he didn't have much spotlight in the team battles?

But to enter in this timing and bring up the spirit is a good idea.

In a situation where their stamina is being chipped away, it would be bad for them to lose their willpower.

He must be tired as well, but it seems he is able to properly deflect the pitiful great sword that has been absorbed into Ilumgand's right arm.

The battle has begun once again, to the point where they have to give him another big attack.

Thanks to Misura's initiative, they have somehow managed to step it up.

(Waka-sama)

Shiki?

What is it? Is there a problem?

Thankfully, right now everyone of Limia is looking at the stage.

I have some room to talk with Shiki in thought transmission.

(What? A problem?) (Makoto)

(Yes. About two) (Shiki)

(Let's hear it) (Makoto)

(First, about this variant. It seems that it will be impossible for the students to incapacitate it with pain. Moreover, the fact that he was a former student is making them unable to show their original battle power, so…) (Shiki)

(They probably won't be able to beat it?) (Makoto)

(… Yes. If it's just defeating him, they have already marked the medulla oblongata that seems to be his weak point, but it might be difficult) (Shiki)

(I see. When it seems like it is totally impossible, Shiki, shift with them and incapacitate him. And the other one?) (Makoto)

(It seems another one of those has entered here. There's the danger that it might head to the spectator seats, so be cautious) (Shiki)

(Oh, I see. Thanks, I will be careful) (Makoto)

It seems nothing special happened in the middle of our transmission, and I was able to safely finish the thought transmission with Shiki.

Hmph~, one more is coming here huh.

Even if their mechanism is the same, their powers might be different.

I have to be in a distance where I can protect this people at any

moment.

I am not sure if we will be able to cure Ilumgand, so I don't know if there's a point in incapacitating him though.

I just thought that it would be easier to talk with the Hopelace Head if his son is not dead.

?!!

Suddenly, the tension around us increased.

For a second I thought that the battle situation changed again, but when I looked, there was no real change.

The Limia King and the Hopelace Head are in the place closest to the stage, the railings of the spectator seats.

And a step behind them, there's Prince Joshua.

But that composition moved.

"King, please step back!"

One of the knights shouts and the two knights unsheathe their weapons and run to the back.

They were probably using perception magic to watch their surroundings.

At the place where they were running to there was nothing visible, but in a place quite a bit far from here, at the exit corridor of the spectator seats, the shadow of a gray colored variant appears.

Uwa~, its appearance is quite different.

Its change is so big that it doesn't even look humanoid anymore.

A person that has developed in an abnormal way.

It has two legs, and more than half of its top is not composed of torso, arms, and then head.

It is only the head.

And its mouth is sticking out like the beak of a bird, and yet, it has fangs.

It still has quite the distance, but despite this, its mouth is so big that I can tell that there's fangs in it.

On top of that, compared to a person, its eyes were more like those of a horse, big black eyes positioned on the sides of the face.

Saying it bluntly, it is disgusting.

In place of hair, its head has several tentacles undulating on it. It doubled its disgusting level.

The knights ran to fight against the monster probably to avoid fighting close to the king.

I see. I can agree with that.

In that case, I will step a bit forward and…

"GYAAAAA!!"

Hah?

There should still be quite a good amount of space between them, and despite this, what's going on?

The knight's scream made me doubt my eyes.

It seems that thing already reached them.

Those stupidly big legs are not for decoration.

It must have made a dash with tremendous instantaneous power.

Looking at the ashen colored variant that cut the knight's body along with the armor to a thousand pieces and created a red spray and screams, for some reason, I associated it with a bullet.

Another scream overlaps.

I don’t know if it’s because it caught him off-guard, or because his skills are not that big of a deal – I will leave it as if it’s the former – but anyways, it didn’t take long before the other knight screamed as well.

The undulating tentacles turned sharp and pierced through the body of the knight.

The torso area, where the armor was the thickest, wasn’t pierced by the tentacles, but every other part was.

Neck, thighs, joints; areas where the armor doesn’t protect, and places where it can’t be protected because of its construction were pierced through.

It is probably fatal.

The place they were fighting was in an area I couldn’t reach in time, so I was unable to protect them.

I could use [Sakai] to heal them, but if I do so, that variant would also enter in its range.

Also, if I loosen my magic power suppression, what I am hiding might be discovered.

Tch.

But I definitely can protect these three.

It may not be the best option, but I have to deal with it.

Taking a crouching start stance with only its legs, it places strength in them. The variant turns its beak-shaped mouth towards me.

Ah, this is not a dash.

I was somehow able to tell that.

It seems my comparison was correct.

That thing shoots its body like a bullet and heads to our location in

a straight line.

Okay, let's stop it and defeat it.

When I was about to stop it and made a step forward, for some reason, a shadow passes beside me.

?!!

Prince Joshua?!

"Father, please run!" (Prince)

Unsheathing a glittering thin sword that I would only think of as a decoration, the prince rushes to the variant in order to protect the king!

Ah!

Is he an idiot?!

This is bad.

Having the prince wounded would be extremely bad.

Right.

Even if I am not tense, that doesn't mean the surroundings aren't either.

Even so, this prince-sama is quite…

If I weren't here, who knows what would have happened.

(Sorry Shiki. Wounded people or maybe casualties have appeared. I want you to come here and provide medical treatment. Mio can stay there, I leave the babysitting to you, Mio. I count on you, don't let the students die) (Makoto)

Those two knights… it is probably too late.

But if it's Shiki, maybe he will be able to heal them.

Since I didn't have the leeway, I just leave those orders to Shiki and Mio without making an actual conversation.

From here, I can't tell if the knights are breathing or not, even so, from what I see, those are definitely fatal wounds.

It doesn't seem like there are other enemies, so if I just hold this one down it will be okay.

I hurriedly chase after the prince.

The variant is fast as expected.

At this rate… I won't make it.

My body can't just suddenly go from zero to max speed.

In an instant I understood that I wouldn't be able to make it, so I make an 'invisible arm' with magic power in the space between the prince and the variant, to protect him.

I have [Sakai] to conceal it, so it should be invisible.

If he gets wounded he can still be healed, but if possible, I want him to leave unscathed.

My magic power catches the variant when it was reaching its highest speed.

Just like that, I swing the 'arm' and throw the variant to separate it from the prince.

While relieved by the fact that I made it in time, I carry Prince Joshua and escape from that place. I jump into an area where that thing's vision won't reach the prince.

Damn it. I have separated slightly from the king.

I threw it away, so it won't come with another attack so soon but, I have to defeat it quickly.

[Prince, it was a sudden development, so please forgive me for my

rudeness. I will deal with that thing]

Writing all of that at once, I began to wonder what the mysterious sensation in my hand was.

Eh?

"?!!"

When I look down, I see the stiffened face of Prince Joshua.

Maybe because of the shock of a while ago, or because it got stuck somewhere along the way; a part of his clothes were quite torn off and…

My hand is on top of that…

No way, this is, breast?

Eh?

My brain is in turmoil.

"… I will explain the circumstances later. Right now, please protect father" (Prince?)

Dyed in bashfulness, he, no, her? I heard her low voice.

I hurriedly separate my hand from her body.

Unable to hide all of my confusion, I correct my posture as if springing away.

Right.

I feel like I have done something quite bad, but right now the priority is taking out that thing.

Great, looks like that thing is still dizzy.

I restrain it with [Brid] and shorten the distance.

What I used was a non-elemental [Brid].

Chantless and no element. I did plan on winning with that, but it didn't turn into a fatal wound.

However, it was plenty enough to hold it back.

Thanks to that, I was able to shorten the distance plenty enough. I clad magic power into my right hand and punch the side of its face.

The variant, that was send flying away with my punch, hit several seats and rails on the way and was bounded by it.

Great.

With this, the Limia king should be in a safe position.

Non-elemental spells have a tendency of having less firepower compared to the elemental spells of the same level, but from what I saw just now, a [Brid] is plenty enough to defeat it.

I do a quick aria, and making a gesture as if preparing a bow, I shoot out a white arrow.

The [Brid] that hit right on its beak didn't pierce immediately and sends the whole variant to the back, weaving its way in a part of the spectators' seat.

That's because I reduced the piercing power on purpose.

I don't know what it might do, so I thought it would be better to have distance.

But it seems my worries were unnecessary.

The variant swelled as if bubbles were popping up from inside it, and after, it scattered in all directions and died.

Ah, I was worried for a second there.

I see that Shiki has begun the treatment of one of the knights and I sigh once.

Looks like at least one of them will be saved.

I finished one job now.

… About the prince, I hope it doesn't turn into a new trouble. But well, don't think that will be possible.

If it was just the fight it would be so simple…

I try not to make eye contact with the prince and bring her to where the king is.

While I was thinking all this, I heard a scream incomparable to the ones before.

Chapter 140: Amelia

"Amelia, I will be going up there to provide medical treatment to the injured knights. There's no need to push yourself too much. When I return, I will do something about him. Mio-dono, I leave them in your care for a while" (Shiki)

"Okay. Waka-sama is calling, so hurry up. No need to worry here-desu wa" (Mio)

Shiki-san, who is at the rear, talks to me.

I can tell that he is being considerate towards us because we are having difficulties against the existence that was once Ilumgand.

But at the same time, my stomach pains at the fact that I can't meet his expectations.

… My connection with Ilumgand right now holds no importance.

Even if that's connected with my bad movements a bit.

The movements of everyone else are not good either after all.

If we did something like this in the usual classes, it would be to the level where the fight would be suspended and we would be lectured.

Because the current opponent we are facing is not a simple mamono but a student that attends the same school and has transformed, no matter how much I try, it is hard to deal with.

I hesitate in killing him, and even when we try to call him out to return him to his senses, we are not receiving a single decent response.

Aiming at a place where his life wouldn't be in danger, we managed to drop those arms of his.

But it looks like that pain didn't have any effect on him.

It probably made a scream filled with anger, but it soon regenerated his whole arms and the fight resumed.

If Misura didn't step forward at that time, we would have been swallowed by agitation and probably torn apart like the Purple Coats.

I have no words for my gratitude towards him.

What's 'mortifying' is that the current Ilumgand is quite stronger than us.

This is not an evaluation of him as a hyuman, but as the thing Shiki-san called variant though.

Leaving aside if he will be able to return or not, he became stronger than us again.

I can feel a certain emotion welling up inside me.

There's a part of me that wants to let my emotions take control and go punch him. But that's something I can't do at all cost.

It would turn into the impetus for the destruction of our party after all.

In the first place, I wouldn't be able to show such a pathetic self to that person, no, I don't want to show it to everyone.

That's why in this situation, the best choice would be to wait for Shiki-san to return.

The one who is staying here, Mio-san, doesn't show any signs of lending us any help, and it feels as if she is telling us to deal with it somehow with the directions she has given until now.

she is a really different type from Shiki-san.

The nature of Ilumgand's attacks, his immunity to all but one element, and his vital spot; she has already told us several

important things to fight Ilumgand.

When we enquired things, she would answer; when we were wrong, she would give us hints.

The Academy's prided magic warrior corps (the ones who came here were the magician corps though) the Purple Coats.

That's right. Even if it was their first time fighting it, the strongest fighting power in this town was easily defeated.

The reason why we are able to somehow fight against an enemy like that is mostly because we had Shiki-san's healing, Mio's advice, Sensei's equipment, and the blessing of the Goddess. No, it is practically the whole reason why we are able to stand against him at all.

In other words, we have been boosted in all standards and are now in this position.

If we fought carrying this hesitation without the healing, advice, and outstanding equipment; we would have fallen long ago.

We have been trained every day to defeat this amount of difference in strength with our teamwork, and yet, how pathetic we are.

"Damn it!! Just fall already"

Jin is kind.

He is still avoiding the vital and aiming to incapacitate Ilumgand.

He still thinks of him as our senpai.

The he is using right now to push through is dual wielding.

Defeat before being defeated.

That's the fighting Jin aims for.

And yet, there's vigor missing in the unrelenting sword of him that swallows even the attacks of his opponents.

Against an opponent that has strong regeneration ability, a dulled sword will only create the worst cycle.

The thing that was once Ilumgand is definitely coming at us with the intent to kill, so it makes it even worse.

“I am not good with fire element you know!”

Saying so, Izumo looks as if he is pained while shooting magic.

Using the wind element, he obstructs the opponent’s movements and robs them of their vision, and while maintaining his high speed mobility enhancement, he throws a barrage of spells.

The fighting tactic he uses normally is nowhere to be found.

The wind spells that get close to that thing are all dispersed.

Instead of calling it resistance, it was more like nullification.

Even when shooting them up-close, his fire element spell’s attack power is not enough and it doesn’t show much effect.

That’s why he stepped back to the rear and staying his feet, and to compensate for it, he is concentrating only on attacks to increase the attack power even if only a bit.

Moreover, since he is shooting a rapid succession of spells that are not his original forte element, his magic power is decreasing at a fast rate.

Izumo doesn’t have an amount of magic power fit for long period fights after all, so it can’t be helped.

“Not yet! I can still stop it!!”

Only Misura, who is standing at the frontlines and stopping the attacks, has enough willpower.

If contrary to his willpower, his healing magic were to run short, the danger he faces will increase in an instant.

To just stop the attacks and be relieved by it is dangerous.

He has to protect the line between us or everyone will crumble.

“There’s no end to this guy!”

“He prioritizes the attacks that are aimed to finish him! How tiresome!!”

Daena and Yuno use speed and feints to attack.

But their stamina already reached their limits a long time ago. Moreover, transforming into a monster turned him less intelligent, but in exchange, his instincts got better. He doesn’t let us get in any important hits.

The instantaneous power fighting that prioritizes speed is, obviously, not fit for long term battles at all.

It might be better for Yuno to stand back and attack with her bow.

If those two get hit in the moment they run out of energy, it would be fatal.

“*Sefuto aruosute eda kurai*”

Sif is chanting a fire spell with high firepower.

The one who is able to throw the most effective attacks against Ilumgand is her.

She is also one of our spiritual supports along with Misura.

In other words, if we don’t properly utilize her magic power, we won’t have a chance of winning.

…

That’s right.

If we want to win this fight with our own power without any more assistance… “Incapacitating him” is already impossible.

We have no other choice but to shoot an attack onto his weak point with the intent to kill.

Normally, Jin would be the one who would make a plan and organize us, but it is hard to expect that from him in his current state.

Even when he badmouthed senpai that much, there's no doubt that he is trying to save senpai.

That's Jin's greatest strong point and at the same time his weakness.

Maybe he will change in the remaining time he is at the academy. No, he probably won't change.

A bitter smile came out unconsciously.

In my head there's already a plan.

I thought about it multiple times and I arrived to the same conclusion.

If we go at it for the kill, we can still do it.

We should be able to.

… There's no need to hesitate. It is better than worrying about it and ending up too late to be able to do anything.

'They can heal us, so it is fine to lose' I don't want something like that.

Also, to lose against this maddened Ilumgand, I definitely don't want to.

I didn't want to be involved with him, and yet, he continued messing with me and everyone else.

And then he turns into this…

A high-pitched sound reverberated.

It is the sound of Jin's sword clashing with the great sword that has

been absorbed by the right arm of Ilumgand.

In a fight of strength, Jin would be pushed back.

Jin most likely knows the result, so before that happened, he rode in the shock of the attack and jumped back. To decrease the damage even if a bit.

Ilumgand didn't chase after Jin.

In place of that, he opened his mouth wide and was doing a strange magic power gathering method.

This is the first time I see him doing that.

In an instant, an unpleasant sensation assaulted my mind.

Ah.

Could it be!

"Everyone, barriers! A howling roar is coming!!" (Amelia)

I instantly shout and create a barrier to cover for the rear guard.

My range is not enough to reach the frontline!

I suddenly recall the memories of being cornered by that lesser dragon, so I was able to reflexively use the barrier method I thought when against a howl.

Because that was the worst trauma for me.

Even if I knew it would reduce my options, I still made sure I was able to create a barrier at any time, and it was unexpectedly useful at this moment.

And as I thought, a roar that had some sort of endowed effect reverberated through the very core of my body and assaulted us.

It seems like it has the same effect as the dragon, overpowering. As if paralyzed, the movements of Jin, Daena, and Yuno stopped.

The moment I saw that scene, the little hesitation that was left in me… disappeared.

Maybe it was a technique that left him stiff, Ilumgand was still not moving.

I am different from Jin.

Instead of losing my comrades, I would prefer to kill him.

"… Sif, can you endow that spell into my arrow? I am sorry for asking you to do endowment which you are not that good at" (Amelia)

"Eh? That's impossible. It's not only because I am not good at it, the spell is already completed you know? Could it be, you are talking about the technique Shiki-san showed us once? If I do such a reckless endowment, even if it succeeds, it would not last 10 seconds before exploding. That was only possible because it was Shiki-san" (Sif)

"10 seconds huh? No problem. Izumo! You can move right?!" (Amelia)

"Tsuuu, somehow. Thanks for the barrier. Is that what you call a trump card? It reminded me of grandma's pocket" (Izumo)

"Stop with the pointless talk. Use a speed increase on me. Can you do it?" (Amelia)

"Eh, yeah, I can. But right now we have to cover for everyone else" (Izumo)

I shake my head.

"You already understand that there's no leeway to do that right? I will finish that guy" (Amelia)

"?!!"

"See, it is beginning to move!! If they get hit in that defenseless state, even Misura will die instantly!" (Amelia)

“B-But…” (Izumo)

From what I see, Izumo is probably in the side that wants to save Ilumgand.

“… ‘I will carry the burden’, is that what you intent to do? Then I will make sure it is a direct hit this time, so please create an opening” (Sif)

Sif is in the side that doesn’t care if he dies.

That’s why she is worried that I will be carrying the burden, so she is trying to dirty her own hands.

But that’s just not going to work.

“Impossible. His current magic defense is way too high. In terms of physical and magical damage, it has to possess quite the power or it won’t break through. Can you do even more than the last attack, in a situation where it might drag your comrades in it?” (Amelia)

We were able to secure enough space, that’s why she was able to shoot the previous attack that dropped the arms of Ilumgand.

I don’t think Sif would be able to control that much firepower into a hit to his vital spot.

The accuracy of her attacks are not that high. That’s one of the weaknesses she has.

Well, she has way too many plus points, so it doesn’t matter that much, but right now that’s not the case.

“T-That’s…” (Sif)

“That’s why I will do it. To smash him with both physical and magic attack, it is best to use my arrow and the forced endowment after all. It is okay, the chance of success is decent. Please let me show my cool side in front of Shiki-san” (Amelia)

With a slightly playful tone, but serious eyes, I look at Sif and ask for her cooperation.

Suddenly, my body felt lighter.

“Aah!! It is already a despairing situation! I will restrain Ilumgand with all the magic power I have, so Amelia, I leave the rest to you! Not caring about what happens just because Shiki-san is here, that’s just too uncool!!” (Izumo)

With a teary expression, the despairing Izumo began shooting attack magic towards Ilumgand.

“… Understood. In the times when Jin is unable to move, you are the leader. That’s what we decided right?” (Sif)

“Thanks Sif” (Amelia)

The powerful fire element spell that Sif completed was condensing in the tip of the arrow at my right hand.

What was that about ‘if it succeeds?’?

I knew that she would surely be able to do it.

I am aiming for the same path as her, so I know how many steps ahead of me she is.

It will definitely last for 10 seconds.

I dashed instantly.

I run beside the barrage cover that Izumo wringed out with his last amount of magic power, and, after accelerating in one breath, I kick the ground.

Reaching a height higher than average with my jump, I activate a floating spell.

Feeling a gentle sensation of my whole body being lifted up, I was brought up to the max height my jump reached again.

Below me, Ilumgand is looking at me.

Just as planned.

He thinks it is natural to receive the attacks.

That's how much confidence he has in his defensive power.

But right now you don't have a single obstacle around you that might serve as defense.

There's nothing obstructing the space between you and me.

Shooting from midair.

I was doing it just like normal, but for some reason, Raidou-sensei was surprised.

His face was saying 'how dexterous'.

If someone like him, who has a 100% hit rate in his shots, tells me that, I could only take it as him making fun of me though.

Depending on the situation, jumping and firing is a valid option.

It's easier to secure a shooting space.

If I don't look at the state of the battle, I also face the risk of exposing myself to the opponent's attack, so it isn't only plusses.

Thanks to the previous attack of Sif, I was able to tell the degree of that prided defensive power of his.

Even if he blocks with both of his arms, my arrow that has a ferocious endowment will still be able to at least get his neck.

That's why– ?!!

"!! Don't tell me, that thing in his arm?! This is bad!!"

Imprisoned in my stance, I see something unbelievable.

With his left hand he grabs the arm that was dropped previously, and throws it towards me.

You are kidding right? Using his own arm… I wasn't expecting…

“Nameless children of earth! Provide support!”

Sif’s voice!

I honestly wasn’t expecting anymore backup from the girl that gave me her completed spell.

But she still had the spirit magic.

It doesn’t have much effect on Ilumgand, but it seems she still has more up her sleeves.

Several stone arms stretch out from below Sif and went to grab at Ilumgand’s legs.

The truly troublesome thing about him is that aside from fire element and non-elemental spells, the other elements can’t even enter his surroundings.

Destroying his footing, using wind to blind him and obstruct his movements; the things we want to do, he didn’t let us do it.

Especially the water element resistance. It even looked like he was being powered-up by it.

It’s the worst.

And so, the one Sif used just now was activating the spell in an area close to her and stretching it towards the target.

The bind type spells normally activate around the target’s area, so this one is quite irregular.

… I see, I think I somewhat understand the origin of her idea.

Did she use the spell that Eris-san used that time in summer as reference?

It entered enough to touch him, but as expected, the spell scattered in an instant.

But the trajectory of the arm that’s flying at me has been slightly

deviated.

That's enough. Thanks.

I feel a dull impact in my side, but compared to receiving a direct hit, this pain is nothing and I just fix my arrow to the bow.

I'm glad I used pain mitigation just in case something happened at the fall.

That impact felt like bad news.

I feel like I might cry if I look at it, so I don't.

While looking at the tip of the arrow that's about to rampage, I fix my aim to the head of the 'variant'.

Don't hesitate.

There's no time.

If the spell explodes before impact, it is over.

This is not magic power endowment but magic spell endowment.

This can't even be called endowment magic. An irregular of irregulars.

There are too many demerits.

But Shiki-san did it like it was nothing.

And right now the merit is what makes it worth.

I want to defeat that thing.

I want to surpass it.

I don't hesitate over anything and head onto 'the next step'.

I have to hit no matter what.

That's why… I pray.

The face of Shiki-san, and another person, appeared in my mind.

… Even if I pray to you, I will definitely not be able to obtain that power of yours with my current self though.

It appears in my mind.

The two people that my current self considers the most reliable of all.

“— Hit in the middle!!”

Isn’t that right, Raidou-sensei?

The red arrow I shot flew splendidly to the aimed place as if blessed. It pierces onto the ‘variant’s’ crossed arms.

For a moment the momentum decreased, but it easily pierced through.

Moreover, from the head that was hidden by both hands, I could tell that the arrow sunk deep into the vital point and a part of the neck I was aiming for, at the inner spine.

It… hit.

… It’s over.

I was sure.

I look at the man that has shouted several times watching our fight from the spectator seats.

That person is most likely the Head of the Hopelace household in Limia Kingdom.

That person is my…

Even though I wanted to avoid problematic things, so I came here from a remote region of the empire to this academy…

Why did it end up like this?

But well, it's fine already.

Because with this, it's all…

My thoughts… I can't put them up properly.

For some reason, a feeling of hollow sadness spread through my chest.

And then, in the moment that I witnessed the outcome and my tension disappeared…

I wanted to scream from the pain that I felt in my side for a moment, but even with that, I was somehow able to grit my teeth.

In my silent state, I entrust my body to the falling sensation and the exhaustion, and relinquish my consciousness.

The explosion that occurred a second later and the thunderous sound that came after.

That resonated in my ears, along with the distant unsightly screams of the 'man' that I was never able to feel the real emotions of.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

"Hello there, Tomoe"

"Root huh. Is it okay for the Adventurer Guild to be in this kind of place?" (Tomoe)

"Luckily the headquarters seem to be empty. Also, it's not Root, its Falz. In this place that is" (Root)

"Hmph, well, this will be my thanks for your cooperation-ja. I will follow you on that" (Tomoe)

Excluding the Limia Kingdom's group; Tomoe evacuated the guests to one of the shelters the Academy Principal knows of.

After that, she stood at the shelter's entrance with the front that it is to protect them.

In truth, there's the simple reason that it was more convenient to give instructions to the company members with thought transmission if she is there.

Also, because she hasn't consulted with Makoto about how to move the guests of the several countries, she is trying to reduce the contact she has with them.

"And the situation is? I don't mind if you just tell me what you can say" (Root)

"Most of it is going favorably. It will probably settle down in about one or two days" (Tomoe)

"Hm? No no, I wasn't referring to that. About Mako-, Waka-sama. I was wondering if you were able to ask what you wanted to" (Root)

Tomoe was telling him the current state of the turmoil, but in contrast to that, Root denied it and states that he wants to know about herself.

Hearing those words, Tomoe was slightly flustered and responds with a facial reaction.

"?!"

"That's cute. I don't know what you wanted to ask that you even went so far as to rely on the power of alcohol, but, how did it go? Did he tell you anything in your drunken state?" (Root)

"You're so annoying. In the end, even without relying on such a nostrum, I more or less understand what's inside Waka's heart. Right now… I am fine with that" (Tomoe)

"What, so there was no point in getting drunk huh. What a waste. That thing, your body develops resistance to it, so after one month you won't be able to use it again. Since you have the chance, how about drinking it again while it is still effective?" (Root)

"I can still enjoy alcohol even without getting that drunk. I do think that it was a hard to get experience though. Seriously. I was wondering what you were going to say and here you go with such a

stupid thing” (Tomoe)

“That’s because I am interested you know. In the path that he intends to take” (Root)

“… I have no intentions of getting friendly with you. But, it is true that you have looked after us in these few days. I will tell you a bit. With this, Waka will probably notice the large amount of paths he can choose” (Tomoe)

“Hmph~. I see. It seems you guys have quite a lot of secrets, but can I take it as you guys beginning a change to this world?” (Root)

Roots narrows his eyes and asks Tomoe the true meaning.

That question felt as if he was happy and at the same time filled with curiosity.

And, it also felt as if he was cautious.

“Who knows” (Tomoe)

“Geez, isn’t it fine to just tell me a bit more? Like, joining the Limia hero and becoming the hope of hyumans, accelerating the madness in Gritonia, receiving the protection of Lorel’s wise man creed and live in peace, or you know, separating Aion from Tsige and making it independent” (Root)

“… I’m surprised you could think of so many-ja na” (Tomoe)

Tomoe mutters amazed at the possibilities Root pointed out.

“Then… go to the church and become a believer of the Goddess? If he wants to blend into this world, that’s also an option. He did look like he wanted to fit with the hyumans after all” (Root)

“Nothing to say-ja” (Tomoe)

“… There’s also the choice of assisting the demon lord in destroying the hyuman society that he considers warped, right?” (Root)

“…” (Tomoe)

“Scary～, so he is choosing a future path without being self-aware that he will be in a position to control the scale of the war. Ah～, in my opinion, I feel like he is slightly underestimating the power he possesses. If he felt constrained, it wouldn’t be strange to have moved a long time ago” (Root)

“… Waka also has the experience and values he has lived up with until now. That person has a stubborn side as well after all. We also have a lot going on our side-ja yo” (Tomoe)

“Values? His? I want to know” (Root)

“…”

“Staying silent huh. That’s troublesome. Then, can you please tell me only one thing? It doesn’t have to be everything either. In exchange, I will also give you information that will prove useful. Like this, I feel like you are just leaving me in a cliffhanger” (Root)

“Hmph. Depends on the content” (Tomoe)

“Do I see interest? I’m happy. What I am the most interested in right now is the talk we had before, the talk about him changing. How is it?” (Root)

Root’s words referred to the conversation they had before in a summer night.

The eyebrows of Tomoe twitched and she hangs her head down as if thinking of something.

“That huh. Well, it should be fine to tell you a bit” (Tomoe)

Tomoe raises her head a bit and accepts.

“Really?! I know that he has changed a bit since that time, but I wanted the opinion of someone that is close to him, like you Tomoe” (Root)

Root was delighted made an innocent smile.

“A dramatic change like the one you are assuming has still not

happened yet. Waka still hasn't decided on what he wants to do after all. But, in terms of power, he has totally blossomed. If for example, you and Waka end up fighting, we would be able to watch without worries. That's how much he has grown" (Tomoe)

"?! Heh~. But I think that he would have been able to put up a fight against me even before he met me though. It doesn't sound like he has grown that much" (Root)

"I said 'watch without worries', didn't I? If you were to fight him upfront, well, you are in outline the summit of superior dragons, so you might be able to leave some scratches on him" (Tomoe)

Root looks at Tomoe as if in total loss of words.

The word speechless fit him well at this moment.

"Right now I still don't know from how high of a place my master is overlooking this society in or what he is thinking of-ja. However, regarding Waka, I recommend you to not lay a hand on him-ja na. If my master enters the 'changing' step you talk about, no matter if it's a superior dragon, it would be no different from a lizard" (Tomoe)

Unable to continue his words, Tomoe talks to Root as if giving the finishing blow.

"And then, what was that useful information you were talking about-ja?" (Tomoe)

"… The trump card of the hyumans is beginning to move. Well, if he has become that strong, there might be no need to worry" (Root)

"Trump card. The dragon slayer? If I remember correctly, she is the strongest hyuman-ja na" (Tomoe)

"Dragon Slayer, are you talking about Sofia? By no means. She is just a girl with the highest level in the people that are registered at the Guild and the one who defeated Lancer, that's all. If you say strongest, that's not the case" (Root)

"Then who are you talking about-ja?" (Tomoe)

“The one that is the most loved by the Goddess after the heroes. It seems to be a well-made Imadai” (Root)

“Imadai… is that an ascended being?” (Tomoe)

“I see, you probably didn’t know. It refers to a special linage of hyumans that can use an element that even the Goddess can’t use. For now, just think of it as the Goddess beginning to put serious effort even when busy. Her being busy is her just deserts though” (Root)

“Fumu. Well, I will gratefully receive your information. If you have finished your business, return. If you are with me all the time and they suspect some sort of relationship, it would be troublesome. Also, I feel like I paid too much. I will have you properly calm down the matter of the teleportation, okay?” (Tomoe)

With her left hand she goes ‘Shoo shoo’, showing a gesture of driving away Root.

“Understood. I finally get the chance to have Makoto-kun feel indebted to me, so I will properly do my part. I am more used to interacting with hyumans than you guys after all. I will go give a report later about how it went. To Waka-sama that is” (Root)

“Hmph, just telling you, I won’t be giving you the katana. And of course, accompanying me in my teleportation is out of question-ja” (Tomoe)

“Of course. Leave it to me. Well then, give my regards to him. Also… it seems like none of the countries have noticed, but keep the thought transmission interception to a moderate level, okay? Seriously, even the thought transmission of you guys is terrifying. Don’t worry, I won’t talk with Makoto-kun. Thought transmission and teleportation; if the countries learned only these two, the war against the demon race would prolong for many years” (Root)

As if amazed, Root shrugs his shoulders and leaves the place where Tomoe is.

The place he is heading to is the area where the guests are in.

Just like how he told Tomoe, it seems he is obediently behaving as the Guild Master Falz.

Tomoe, who is standing at a faraway place with the pretext of being a guard, sees off that back.

“Prolong… That Root, so he is also informed in the internal conditions of the demon race. I don’t really have any interest in the war between the hyumans and the demon race, but if he is involved with both parties, I pity them a bit. Well then, I wonder when we should counterattack. In the meantime, I will leave them helping out with the evacuation. I feel like we can use that babysitting as a pretext a few days later-ja” (Tomoe)

After being left alone again, Tomoe resumes her instructions to the company.

She arranges the reports she received by thought transmission in the time she was talking with Root.

Reports of her subordinates, intercepting the communication of the countries; in the time Tomoe herself is concentrating, a massive amount of information flows in.

On top of that, Tomoe is calculating the timing to move.

She is disposing of the store that already has no inventory in it and has now become just a mere building.

Because it is fine to just rebuild it if they want to.

There’s no need to be concerned about safety, is what she is thinking.

The company employees that are receiving instructions from Tomoe are right now dispersed around various areas of the town. Already having a list up of the areas where the variants are not rampaging and the places that can be used as refuge, they guide the town residents that are panicked.

Currently she has gotten the okay from the slum where the demi-humans are living in, and has added it in the list of safe places.

The chaos is still spreading, but the Kuzunoha Company and Tomoe as well, continued their moves without showing any sort of confusion.

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“I see. Makoto-kun has already become that strong huh”

Root was shocked by the words of Tomoe, however, his feelings of joy were bigger.

‘He is certainly able to defeat you’ even when told that, he didn’t show signs of pessimism.

“Maybe, you will really become an existence that can shoot down the Goddess. You say that you are misfortunate, but why? Thinking about the current state of the Goddess where she can’t move, Makoto-kun might actually be an incredibly lucky one. I am having a lot of fun. As I thought, you really are the best. I don’t care in what you change. I am looking forward to the day I can see your power. If possible, I want to someday be able to walk alongside you and watch the same scenery as you. Fufu” (Root)

Muttering in a low tone, his expression looked pleased. A hard to approach atmosphere surrounding him.

Chapter 141: Competition grounds, one end

Amelia huh.

Hmph～ she was the one who killed Ilumgand.

Shiki should have told her not to overdo it, and the students were clearly hesitant.

I thought their hesitation came from their attacks that were like measuring his power and there was a vague line in their way of coping with things, but…

Amelia Hopelace.

Hopelace.

Did she really have some sort of antagonism towards the Hopelace household in Limia?

She had the same family name so I asked her in an indirect way before, but she didn't answer, and I didn't want to force her into saying something she doesn't want to.

I am like a cram school teacher.

I don't have any intentions of interfering with the circumstances of this place.

Well, no matter what it is, they have defeated Ilumgand thanks to Amelia, so that's fine.

No, as a result, it has also turned into something troublesome for me, so maybe I should have asked for her circumstances even if it was hard for her?

But if I did that, I would be making our connection pointlessly deeper.

The dry relationship that a temporary teacher and a student should have is pretty comfortable for me.

Knowing the distance between my students is difficult.

I was getting used to being a temporary teacher, but in times, I feel the difficulties of it in this kind of way.

If I had to evaluate the fight of Jin and the others as a battle teacher, sadly, I would not give them a passing grade.

If they didn't waste their time hesitating and went for the kill from the very beginning, they wouldn't exhaust themselves and would have been able to finish the fight for sure.

Mio and Shiki were there for support, so it is obvious that they would be able to.

That they were unable to is because they had the thoughts of saving Ilumgand, and it was probably because they were driven by Jin into that mindset and ended up having a tough fight.

I did tell an excuse to the Limia king, that they were fighting to call out Ilumgand, but honestly, I wasn't expecting much.

If it were an opponent that magic can show its effect with, there would be a number of methods to make it unable to act, but if it's only the fire element that works properly, the current group of Jin has practically no choice but to fight upfront.

With those conditions, as long as a miracle doesn't occur, there would be no way of winning aside from killing.

That's why, with this in mind, I was thinking about letting Shiki handle it if it seemed impossible for them.

Of course, that talk about passing grade I was thinking about a while ago, I will just keep that thought inside my head.

The fight just now wasn't a simple battle for them, and if they survived in actual combat, that's something to be happy about.

There's no need to point that out and pour cold water on them.

Looking at the gray lump of meat that was once Ilumgand and the students respectively, I thought that way.

"Waka-sama, the treatment to one of the knights somehow made it in time. The other one was already dead and in no state for treatment" (Shiki)

[Got it. Please return to the students' side]

"As you will" (Shiki)

Finishing his report to me, Shiki greets the Limia King and heads to where the students are.

[We were unable to save one of the knights. I'm truly sorry. Also, no words are enough to apology for the result of Ilumgand-sama]

He was able to save one huh.

I have to thank Shiki for that.

"Raidou, there's no need for you to mind it. Just remembering those wounds, I am happy that at least one has been saved. Let me thank you once again for saving the life of the knight and the prince. You defeating that monster was also splendid" (King)

Prince.

Ah…

I suddenly recall that sensation in my hands.

I feel like that will definitely turn into something troublesome later.

For now, I should be grateful that the topic is not touched yet.

In the first place, the breasts of the prince were nowhere to be found.

But for my hand to accidentally end up in that kind of place after her sarashi or something similar to hide her chest was torn, what kind of accident is that?

[Those words are wasted on me]

“Your students were also great. Even if it was with a group of seven, they were able to defeat an opponent that our imperial knights couldn’t. It is to the point that I want to bring all of them back to my country. Of course, also you who the defeated the same type of monster” (King)

His gaze is going back and forth between me and the short katana.

How to call it, it was like the eyes of an influential person.

Also ‘the same type’ huh.

I wonder about that. Ilumgand felt a few steps stronger and troublesome.

As I thought, maybe he was special?

I don’t know what activities Rona did in this town, so I don’t know the background either.

[Sorry to say this, but the variant I fought was a lot weaker than the one my students were fighting. So please acknowledge them instead of me. I think it was a harsh experience for them, but they fought well. Also, each one of them may have some thoughts about their future, but receiving the praise of the Limia King will definitely encourage them]

“Umu. But, weaker huh. I was unable to tell but, is that true? In that case, there’s the chance that the work towards Ilumgand was more through”

The Limia King looks like he is thinking.

This is Rotsgard, but that assaulter – and victim at the same time – is Ilumgand, the son of a noble in Limia.

Also, the school festival that is occurring in this town gathers people from around the world.

If they want to narrow the suspects, there would be way too many candidates and would have a hard time with it.

The demon race would be the biggest suspect, but there's quite a lot going on between hyumans as well.

Anyways, Jin and the others have received a godsend.

To receive words that are practically an unofficial offer from the literal top of one of the four major powers.

There's the fact about national power, but there's also the climate and geography that's comparable to the Empire, and can expect much from Limia in the future. If someone asked me in which of the four major powers I would like to live, Limia would be the one I would most likely choose.

If I choose an area where the nobles are better, I think that it would be easier to live.

Those kids would be happy if they heard this.

From an academy scholarship student into a knight corps or a magician corps in Limia Kingdom is a straight path to success.

Maybe everyone except the Rembrandt sisters will go.

"…"

The Hopelace Head was on his knees, looking at the lump of meat.

Even if it was his second son, it is still the remains of his son.

He most likely lost his strength.

"Raidou-dono, I have something to talk with you about later. I don't mind if it's after this turmoil has calmed down, so please make some time" (Joshua)

[Understood, Prince Joshua]

I don't plan on telling anyone about that previous shock.

But the problem would be, how am I going to make her understand that?

Well then…

We have already secured this place, so let's contact Tomoe and bring this people to the safe place where the other guests are.

And then, have the remaining spectators evacuate.

For now there have been no emergency calls from anyone, so I want to confirm the situation once.

I was prepared to receive several problematic reports from the Mist Lizards, but there wasn't a single one.

As expected of Rembrandt-san.

He must have explained it well.

Well it would have been easier to explain if I called something more hyuman-like for example: Gorgons, Arkes, or the safest choice Forest Onis.

As long as I show it to Rembrandt-san, it would be a matter of time before his daughters also learn about their existence.

It would be troublesome to explain every single thing, so leaving it as if I can only summon the Blue Lizard race is easier for me.

[Even if we stay here, there might be an attack again. Please take refuge in the same safe place as the guests. The matter related to your country has already been resolved]

"But to stay in a safe place like that, do you think I would be able to face the residents of this town?" (King)

[The chief of this town, the Academy Principal, is also there. Of

course, he is most likely moving in order to protect this town. Staying in a safe place to make more precise orders should help in calming down this turmoil faster. We will endeavor in evacuating the residents. I am not used to this kind of situations, but I will do my best]

“Evacuate? With power like yours, shouldn’t you be going for suppressing?” (King)

[Of course, if there’s the need to, I will. Just that, since the academy force is concentrating on suppressing like what happened a while ago, I thought that we should take on the job of guiding the evacuation and aiding which is lacking in personnel]

“… Similar… to the just descended…” (King)

In a low voice, the king mutters something.

Damn it, I missed what he said.

I think he said something about resembling.

Was that a monologue? Well, might as well confirm.

[Sorry, can you please repeat?]

“Ah no, there’s no need to mind it. I see. Then if we stay here fretting, it would only cause trouble huh. Umu… Joshua” (King)

He didn’t tell me.

But he didn’t reject my idea of prioritizing evacuation.

“Yes?” (Joshua)

“I don’t know if it will make it in time, but have an available unit head to Rotsgard. Reinforcements are definitely needed. I don’t mind if it’s after taking shelter, so please contact them. I will talk with the Academy Principal regarding the permission of it. You pass a thought transmission to a relay point and have them hurry the report to the Kingdom” (King)

“Understood. Well, the closest unit is the unit of the Hopelace household that has a territory in the Kingdom’s southern tip. When we secure a safe place where I can do thought transmission, I will transmit it immediately” (Joshua)

Joshua glances, but the Hopelace household head doesn’t react.

Is he alright?

He lost his son, so I wonder if he can do any normal decisions currently.

“Well then, Raidou. It might be troublesome, but please teleport us. After that, can you please lend a shoulder to that absentminded one over there?” (King)

[I would be happy to]

I confirm the location with Tomoe, and make mist that connects to the place she is in.

Thick mist that one can’t see through appeared in front of the king.

I glance at Shiki and Mio.

Looks like they are doing the follow-up of the students.

I thought they could be taken as a fighting force in a matter of this degree, but it is probably no good.

They probably still have in mind that those monsters were former hyumans. The weakening in their strength is heavy.

I don’t know how the evacuation of the other students is going, but I feel like it would be better to send these kids to an evacuation point and have them quietly wait there.

There’s no assurance that there will only be one opponent, and there’s also my promise with Rembrandt-san.

It wouldn’t be good to push them.

While feeling disappointed, I look at the unit that has purple clothing and blood mixed.

Is this the level of the corps that are working as a mainline defense against the variants?

I don't know their real strength and their numbers, but depending on the number of people that can actually fight decently, this matter will probably take several days.

While thinking in my own way about how this situation would develop, I see off the back of the staggering knight.

While at it, I confirm that the Limia King and Prince Joshua disappear into the mist.

Well then.

I take the arm of the Head-dono that is grabbing the rails, motionlessly looking at the lump of meat.

[Hopelace-sama, excuse me. I will see you off, so please depart]

"Don't touch me!!"

"!!"

The moment I take his arm and try to make him stand, he brushes off my hand and yells.

It was quite the high volume, and the eyes of the students and my followers turn to where we are.

Waving my hand to convey that it's nothing, I wait for the Head-dono to stand by himself.

This may be something that can't be helped. He glares at me hatefully and without the need of lending him a shoulder, he staggers to where the mist is and disappears inside it.

Well, not like I was planning on having everyone feel indebted to me though.

Hah…

He didn't even look at Amelia once, and yet, why am I the one getting so much hate?

I don't understand.

Did he inherit the hate his son had?

I don't even know the reason of his son's hate either, so I am still here with a question mark.

I really don't understand the nobles.

I suddenly remember the words of Prince Joshua.

A rampaging beast that one can't feel any trace of personality in it, huh.

The last shout of Ilumgand that was mixed with the thunderous sound of the explosion.

'I just wanted to apologize'

Is what he said.

… This is probably something that will never be realized now.

In the many times that I heard the voice of that variant, I didn't expect to actually understand something he said, but well, since I ended up hearing it, it can't be helped.

If there was someone you wanted to apologize to so much that you shouted it at your last moments….

Don't waste your time pestering me and just do thought transmission or write a letter to tell that person how you felt.

I sympathized with him for a moment, but after seeing off the Head-

dono, I see Mio leaving the stage and running towards me, so I change the gears in my emotions.

No matter what he wanted to say or who it was to, I won't know.

There's no point in worrying about it now.

"Waka-sama, did anything serious happen to you?!" (Mio)

I nod once and answer Mio.

Right now Tomoe should be guiding the Limia group.

There's Root there as well, and the distinguished people have their own point of view, so being there is better for their job.

[I'm fine. In your side, it seems like… it has turned into something complicated]

In a sense, it is to be expected.

The atmosphere around the students isn't only of the victory in that battle, a complicated atmosphere.

Especially Amelia, her exhaustion is terrible.

Looks like she also got injured.

Her shoulder huh.

Even if Shiki treated her, he can't regenerate the clothes and armor, so the place she was injured is easy to tell.

Anyways, even if she has her own circumstances, as long as she doesn't tell me about it, it means that I am not qualified to hear it.

Her loving Shiki is with her, so I will just leave it to him.

If Shiki hears about her circumstances and he finds it necessary to tell me, he will.

There doesn't seem to be anything I can do regarding her.

“That was close. At the end, when he howled and the vanguard was unable to move, I thought that there was no choice but to lend them a hand, but Amelia somehow did it. To endow a completed spell to an arrow, counting Sif, those two really did something reckless-desu wa. It was probably an imitation of Shiki though” (Mio)

[Endowing a spell huh. And that’s what caused the explosion. It was pretty amazing]

An imitation of Shiki huh.

Endowing a completed spell to a weapon, it increases the attack power explosively.

Just that, the effective time is really short.

Shiki said that he can only maintain it for several minutes.

Bluntly speaking, the consumption rate is bad.

As long as you are not that concerned about the attack power of your weapon, there isn’t much point in using it.

Even with Shiki, he said that he mostly used this only when he wanted his opponent to mistake it for endowing magic and create an opening out of it.

It seems the two of them were able to do it, but if it’s them, they would only be able to maintain it for a few seconds.

I see, that’s reckless.

With an opponent like the variant that has high defensive power against magic itself and has a limited amount of elements that are effective against it, this technique barely enters the degree of being useful.

With arrows, there’s the merit that the power won’t decrease even if it distances from you, but if the effective time ends before it reaches the target, it would be completely useless, so the demerits are big.

I approach the vanguard group that is sitting.

"… Sensei"

[Jin, you did well]

"I… I was supposed to not care about what happened to him. Actually, I should have been pissed off. But when I thought that I would be killing him… I just…" (Jin)

It looks like he is confused.

The point is, he thought he would be able to but he couldn't.

And he is unable to accept it.

'Even though I defeat mamonos without mercy', is probably something they all hold in their minds.

[He was a hyuman in the beginning. It's not something strange. Don't push yourself and rest for now]

"?!! Are you saying we will only be in the way?!"

[That's not it. You guys are students. There's no need for students to fight in the frontlines. Fighting is the job of others]

Honestly, there's a part of me that actually thought they would get in the way. But there's no need to say that and hurt them, so I told them my main reason.

Leaving aside if they are dependable or not, the Academy Town has their fighting force as well.

People like the purple clothed guys.

Information will be steadily gathered, so beginning with the Academy Principal, the influential people of the Academy will most likely plan out counter measures for the variants.

At the least, the situation is definitely not to the point that there's the need for the enrolled students to step into the frontlines.

“But we can also fight plenty enough!!” (Jin)

[For someone that fought only once and is already this tired, quite the big words there. Also, even if she was healed, Amelia received quite the injury you know?]

If the second variant intruded in that fight, there’s the possibility that deaths would appear.

Well, the fact that they haven’t touched the topic of that second variant even once might be because they didn’t even notice it.

If that’s the case, I can say for sure that what they need right now is not battle experience but rest.

They don’t have the freedom to fight several variants at once.

Even if I said it was weaker than Ilumgand, depending on the power of the opponent, there’s the chance they might die.

It doesn’t change the fact that they were former hyumans, so there’s the chance they will waver again.

My uneasiness in counting them as fighting force is big.

“Ugh… that is…” (Jin)

[I wanted to restore him]

“?!!”

[That was your true intention, right?]

“It wasn’t for Sensei? Am I… naïve?” (Jin)

The frail words that Jin said were an affirmation that, till the very end, he didn’t choose to kill him.

[I felt that instead of having you guys die, it would be better to bring down Ilumgand. For me, you guys are more important than him, and Amelia probably felt the same way when she took action. If you lament your naivety, it is okay to just improve yourself in

your remaining time at the academy. I think that this trait of yours is a strong point and also an important part of you]

It didn't work in his favor in this occasion though.

It's true that it is one of his biggest appeals.

The composed disposition and the coldhearted trait don't fit him at all.

"It was a naivety that brought everyone into danger. To call it a strong point is just…" (Jin)

Oh? An unusual display of heavy weakness from him.

Even though it is fine to just leave the complicated thinking and concentrate on resting.

[It is fine to just think about that later. Right now you should rest. This is an order as a teacher. I have received information that variants have appeared in this town and in the towns around. This matter will probably take time]

"No way… what in the world is going on?" (Jin)

[Anyways, today you guys should take refuge in the place where the other students are and rest. Even if you want to fight, if your body doesn't follow, there's no point. Also…]

[Sif and Yuno]

I call the Rembrandt sisters that are together.

"Raidou-sensei"

"Sensei"

[Your parents are okay. I have placed dependable bodyguards with them, so there's no need to worry. You will obediently evacuate right?]

"… Understood" (Sif)

“… I will evacuate, for today” (Yuno)

Yuno is also a troublesome lady.

Is she saying that she intends to fight?

Sif also responded as if she was harboring something as well.

I told this to Jin too but, you guys are students so there’s no need to get so eager.

Even though other parts of their body are clearly showing exhaustion, their eyes were strangely vivid.

Is the battle excitement state still continuing?

No matter which, the best choice seems to be rest.

Let’s leave the thankful words of the Limia King for a later time.

There’s also the issue with the Prince as well.

It would be troublesome if she gets rash and does something reckless.

Especially when the person she wants to protect is being targeted.

I was able to experience this just a few moments ago.

[Shiki, Mio. Please guide the students to the evacuation point. If there’s the need to, it is okay to put that place as the guarding priority]

“Eeh?! Uhm, and Waka-sama?” (Mio)

[I will go hear the situation from Tomoe. I leave these kids in your care]

I make mist that connects to the same place as before.

Tomoe, just how long does she intend to watch and wait?

It would be troublesome if the guests were to catch me, so I will just

quietly go there, quickly hear what she has to say, and then head to my store to see how it is going.

Chapter 142: The two small miracles

Ah…

I crumble down in front of it.

‘There’s no problem, we just need to rebuild it later. That’s why I took the store’s sign and disposed of the store’

When I went to hear about the situation, Tomoe told me this without hesitation.

By the time I noticed, I was already here.

My mental state was as if someone told me: ‘hey your house is burning’.

There’s no traces of it being burned though.

Without thinking, I was on my hands and feet, and looking at the place that has turned into rubble.

Kuzunoha Company.

The first store I had.

I didn’t even have previous part-time job experience, left a lot of the work to others, and can only remember lots of bad experiences though.

There were lots of painful memories but… but!

When I see it destroyed like this, I feel sad.

There wasn’t anything important left and it isn’t like my rights for the lot will be gone.

And the things Tomoe said were plausible.

The inventory has all been stowed away in the storage of Asora.

Also, if the stores around are all destroyed and only my store remains safe, it would only bring about unnecessary misunderstandings.

Well the store itself was only furniture and goods, and the renovation was done in a single day.

If I wanted to make it again from 0, I just have to ask the eldwas and it wouldn't even take 3 days.

Even so…

I understand all the reasons, but since it was heavy, a sigh leaks out from my mouth.

It still doesn't change my sadness.

The buildings at both sides are also destroyed completely and the one opposite to us has smoke coming out from the rubbles.

Yeah.

Destroying the store was an appropriate move.

I can tell that a variant unluckily appeared around this area.

I don't know their conduct principle, but if their target is the teleport formations, there was a part of me that thought the damage in town wouldn't be that bad.

That's why I had small hopes in seeing my store safe.

Hah…

Things like Asora and military power… Let's try putting them to practical use.

Is what I resolved to do not that long ago.

Or is she telling me to set sail anew from an empty lot?

… Let's take it in a positive manner.

Change of attitude.

"If the guy who made all this place a mass of rubble was around here, I would still be able to take it down but…" (Makoto)

The remains of what seem to be the results of a fireball crashing. No, it is as if something of high-temperature charged through the place.

Was this done by a variant resembling a fire element wild boar, or something like that?

When I try to picture the offender, the only common point I can find is the gray color skin of the two I have already seen.

The chances that it has a shape I can't even imagine are pretty high. Even so, with small hope, I look around.

But to my disappointment, the area around here is already quiet.

Looks like the residents have already evacuated, and even when I can hear commotion from afar, there's nothing like that in these areas.

My store is gone, so they probably finished evacuating the people in the early stages of the uproar.

Well, physical things will one day break.

I do have lingering affection towards my store, but for now let's just go to where the students have evacuated.

It wouldn't be strange for a temporary teacher to be there and it is safe.

"N?"

I think I heard something.

I perk up my ears.

Yeah, I really do hear something.

A scream.

And it is pretty close.

Several people are screaming intermittently.

That direction is… directly straight from the back of my store.

Wait.

Isn't that the brothel avenue?

There's a variant in such a place too?

The current mission of the Kuzunoha Company is evacuation.

As the representative, I'm no exception.

Or more like, the chances it is the same one that laid waste to this place is pretty high.

It might be the opportunity for retribution.

The equipment the eldwas made for me, the open version jacket. I activate the speed mode.

In the spacious street that has turned slightly athletic-like because of the rubble, I run directly towards the direction of the scream.

Even so, the brothels, a place that would normally not be an objective in a battlefield.

I wonder what reason Rona had to place a variant in such a place.

And in this timing nonetheless.

If the variants rampage following their instincts, their uses would be quite limited, but if their objective is the teleport formations, maybe there's one in that area and she chose to place a variant

there?

No, that's not it.

Ilumgand was a student.

He transformed in the tournament grounds.

In the first place, the chances of ending only as a disturbance if they are driven by instinct is pretty high.

Thinking that she did this even when she withdrew her subordinates, means this plan should not be assured to succeed.

No. What if the demon race is still unable to control the timing of the activation in this tactic?

There's the possibility that they spread the medicine and accessories to the people that get close to their target locations frequently.

If they don't care about the numbers they produce and the amount of casualties, they would probably put the plan in motion.

As usual, I can't imagine what Rona is thinking, but while I was thinking about this and that, I arrived at the source of the scream.

As I thought, it really was the brothel avenue.

In this place the damage to the buildings is not that high. But in the corners of that place, the sounds of screams and destruction resounded.

Over there huh.

Without losing my way I head there, and from the window of a store, a cluster of something comes flying at me.

Oh, a boulder.

A cluster made up of a stove or something of the sort.

It flew at me with quite the speed, but without even touching my jacket, it stopped about 1 meter away from me with magic power

and changed directions before falling.

A heavy noise sounds in a place a bit far from me.

Several clusters continued flying towards me, but they all ended up with the same result. Without minding it, I step into the brothel store where the screams come from.

To think that my first step into the sex industry would be in this manner.

Pardon my intrusion~

“Looks like this is not the one. An octopus?” <Oh god NO> (Makoto)

It didn’t have the shape I was expecting and I clicked my tongue.

The variant there is an octopus.

No, the details are slightly different.

It has 8 legs, but 2 of those are strangely developed and long. At the tip it looks like the hands of a person.

But the impression it gives is that of a white octopus.

For such a creature to be attacking the prostitute *Onee-sans*, how maniac. <Big sisters>

One woman is holding an edged tool that doesn’t look battle oriented and confronting it.

What a brave woman.

And also, there are several Onee-sans at the back showing a fighting stance.

Some were crying, some weak on their knees; there were many varieties.

Since I entered the fray, the situation changed and the body of the octopus faced towards me and had its legs wind.

Was this the one that was throwing stuff at me? Did it do it while against this Onee-san? That's pretty handy. Moreover, it used some sort of method to detect me before I even arrived and began attacking me.

This one also has a special power?

I think that just moving all your legs as an individual being is a pretty impressive power in itself though.

Well, from what I see, it doesn't look like it is that strong.

An opponent that I don't need to mind about what power it has.

Thanks to the fact that it noticed me quick, there's definitely Onee-sans that were saved, so it was actually a good thing.

There's the scent of blood in here as well, so there's no doubt casualties have already happened though.

Even if I begin to think about how many stores that octopus has already attacked, nothing will change.

If that woman with the edged tool that looks like a fruit knife weren't here doing her best, there would definitely be more casualties.

"H-Help us!!"

The words of one of the prostitutes served as the cue. Several high-pitched voices seeking for help came out from their mouths.

No need to tell me, I came with that purpose in mind.

Hm, but the one I defeated with Brid a while ago, exploded.

I don't want to get splashed indoors.

The store's interior has a strong scent drifting about and right now the smell of blood and fat are not that strong, but if the meat of the variant scatters, it would be difficult to clean up in the close future.

[I will take care of this, so take this chance to leave the store. I will guide you to the evacuation point]

“?!! Boy, this guy is pretty strong. I am grateful that you came to help us, but… I will try to somehow hold it back, so please save the girls at the back”

First bring everyone out.

I don’t know if she understood what I said, but I tried to tell her that I would be guiding them later to the evacuation point so wait.

But it seems the woman that is fighting didn’t accept it.

Saying something that can only be taken as self-sacrifice, she asked me to help the others escape.

When I check, I see that the Onee-sans are beginning their mobilization for escape, but the people that are weak on their knees just… can’t move the way they want to.

In a situation where it wouldn’t be strange to just run away without caring, everyone still lent their shoulders to the Onee-sans that can’t move properly to escape together.

Their sense of camaraderie is strong.

But you know…

Between joining the Onee-sans and guiding them to escape, or defeating the variant; the “easiest” one for me would be, without doubt, the latter.

Actually, I should be the one defeating this thing, and that woman should put away that knife and guide the Onee-sans.

The octopus tried to move, but it restraint itself and stopped its movements.

Looks like it at least has enough intelligence to be wary.

“Boy, stop! This is a really dangerous monster! It has already killed

several people. Even if I look like this, I was a former adventurer. From the people here, I am the one that knows about battle the most, that why…”

Heh~, a former adventurer.

There are few adventurers in Rotsgard.

The main reason is that there’s no existing guild here that gives out requests, but it is also because there’s few profitable hunting grounds.

Lately, they have been selling a medicinal plant that can be gathered in a part of the area and is high priced, so the situation has improved a bit though.

By the way, I think the reason might be because of the medicine recipe I exhibited in the church.

It is also the medicinal plant that my students brought to me as a souvenir in summer vacation.

The recipe that we taught the church was created by Shiki and the Arkes with that medicinal plant as the base.

I was surprised when Shiki and the Arkes said they would be able to make it, but thanks to that, my students were able to gain pocket money from it.

It is a bit sad that this is the main way for adventurers to gain money in this place though.

And for a former adventurer who’s a prostitute (probably) to be in this town.

… Now that I think about it, what do adventurers do when they retire?

I think being a prostitute should be in the rare side though. Don’t really know.

If it’s men, I think something with a tough atmosphere like a bar, or

the master of a cafe.

[In that case, I am a temporary teacher working in the academy. If you stay by those girls' side, they will definitely feel safer. I will be fine. I will rejoin you later outside, so please go with them]

"A teacher… from the academy? I see. Then you would be a lot better than a *rotor* like me. Is it really okay to leave it to you?"
＜Rotor＝Vibrator＞

I know a few prostitutes here that have come to my shop before, but I haven't seen this one.

If she knew me beforehand, I wouldn't need to do unnecessary explanation.

While I was feeling a bit troubled, the octopus, without learning its lesson, throws something at me.

Of course, that didn't hit me and was repelled by my magic power.

"?!"

Even if the woman who was talking to me didn't know what I used to defend myself with, it seems she does know that I did something to defend against it.

The way she looked at me changed again.

Looks like she revised her thoughts.

What was thrown was… Geh, the head of someone.

Even if she was beautiful, if it is only a head, there's no way to be charmed by it.

[Don't worry. Please wait outside. If possible, it would be great if you were to guide everyone in the other buildings as well. I will guide everyone to the evacuation point later]

"Not being able to gauge the strength of someone so close to me, I have really grown old. That thing's regeneration ability is quite

strong, beware of it. I have wounded it several times, but it regenerated it all”

[I appreciate the information]

“… I owe you one. Don’t go dying”

Seems like she consented. She joined the prostitutes that were watching and with clear instructions, they began moving.

That’s great.

And so, the only ones left inside the building are the octopus and me.

Ah~, I was nervous there.

Maybe I am not used to battle situations where so many girls are looking at me, I felt a strange pressure.

It was a different nervousness to that of being in a party.

The woman just now was in a wine red short dress that had quite the high exposure rate, and on top of that, she tore a part of it to make it easier to move, so I was troubled settling my eyes.

To be in the brothels and feel calmer around an octopus instead of being surrounded by girls makes me sad though.

‘Your appearance is poison to my eyes, I will be looking forward to the reward. Now, escape quickly’ is something I don’t think I will be able to say.

“Sorry but, the Onee-sans around this place are regulars that come often to buy my energy drinks. Having you kill them is troublesome” (Makoto)

Luckily, this thing only says ‘Shukoshuko’ and I can’t understand what it is saying.

Ilumgand’s case might have been a rare one.

Let's finish this.

I gather magic power to my right hand.

She said something about regeneration, so I do an aria of a single word for rapid-fire Brid.

On the palm of my right hand, a white ball of light is born.

The size is close to that of a baseball.

I turn my palm towards the octopus.

Several short bullet-sized arrow Brids were created from the light ball and they all pierce the octopus one after the other.

It is trying to block with its tentacles, but without caring, I continue shooting several tens of arrows.

It gradually backs off, and in the end, the octopus is sewed in the wall.

The firing continues.

In time, there was a change.

The head of the octopus gets bigger than its original size and then, it began to swell irregularly.

That doesn't look like regeneration.

It is done huh.

I make an earth element aria, and from the floor, a wall is created as if hiding that thing's body.

I don't want it splattering on me after all.

If I were to hit the weak point properly, it might not scatter and turn into a lump of meat like Ilumgand though.

It would be troublesome to search for it all the time, and with things like: effective element, resistances, and absorption, it makes

it even more troublesome.

In that case, it is easier to just damage it till its regeneration limit and finish it.

Things like having several amounts of hyuman magic power increasing its defensive power don't affect me much anyways.

*Buchatto

A big and unpleasant noise sounded.

I release the wall I created and, looking at the white gel-like substance, I confirm that the octopus was defeated.

I can't feel life signs from it.

It is the same as the beaked variant.

It is finished now.

After confirming it, I go outside.

[Sorry for the wait]

When I go outside, I was welcomed by a large amount of gazes.

Ooh.

There are quite a lot.

Moreover, it looks like they are still increasing in numbers.

There are some that are hugging each other from the happiness of being saved.

With these numbers, the slum where the demi-humans are, is an appropriate evacuation point.

Luckily, the demi-human leader there is an acquaintance of us and we already have permission to use the place.

I heard that the Forest Oni Akua is guarding the surroundings of

that area.

There's a good amount of space and there's no variants appearing there.

They will get surprised, but they are able to accept this numbers, and I don't think they will reject it.

When this group is done gathering, I will guide them to the slums while protecting them.

Looks like I can kill a good amount of time.

As Tomoe said, it might take one day or, depending on the situation, several days.

Until then, we will steadily evacuate the residents, and when we 'end up encountering' a variant, we exterminate it.

It looks like my employees are scattered here and there and playing an active role in the evacuation places, so every one of us will probably gather when everything is over.

"You! You are alright. Did you defeat it?"

With her unchanged poisonous appearance, the Onee-san from before approaches me, and after confirming my safety, she asked me the situation.

[Yeah. I'm not sure if any more of those will appear, but I did defeat that… monster. It looks like your side is still increasing in numbers]

"An academy teacher, as expected, quite the impressive one. Well, I don't want to think that more of those things will appear though. And yeah, this was an unexpected situation for the people here after all. In that avenue, there were several customers. You probably already know, but in the brothels there's no day or night. Is the evacuation point far?"

The brothels are active even at daytime huh.

I didn't know that one.

I thought it was a business that operates only at nights.

[From here, the closest place would be the slum. Thinking about the space, it is the most appropriate place. Bringing everyone, I think it will take around 20 minutes]

"Slum?! In the slum where those demi-humans are?! Is it okay to go to such a place to take refuge?"

Just as the name slum implies, it is a place that is recognized by hyumans as a place with bad public order, so it can't be helped that she is surprised.

The people in the slums are actually simplistic and good natured though.

Because of the prejudices, people just go and hate it, so it must be hard to enter that territory because of fear.

[Fortunately, an acquaintance of mine is doing the role of putting the place in order. I work in a company, and that person is part of my connections]

"Ah! You, could it be, you are the Kuzunoha Company's… uhm, Raidou-san?"

I try telling her just in case so she feels more at peace, but for some reason, she reacted in a different point.

I don't know which store in specific are the customers that come to my place, but prostitutes do come to buy in my store frequently.

Maybe she immediately felt familiarity towards me, with a broad smile, she guessed my identity.

[Yes. I'm the representative Raidou]

"Hmph~, you are huh. That place sells a drink that works well for fatigue. I haven't gone to the store myself, but that drink has been helping me a lot"

[Thank you for your patronage. And thank you for your continued work]

To think that she was one of the people that drank it.

I lower my head and express my gratitude.

In present, the energy drink is selling decently. And a percent of it is because of the purchase of people in the night business.

No, it seems they also work at day, so maybe the wording night business is not correct?

Not only is it a rigorous manual labor, it also has irregular times. It really is a rough job.

Thinking that way, I lower my head deeply with those emotions in mind.

"… You, are pretty unique. Well, you are the representative of a unique company so that's a given huh. In this situation, no matter if it's the slum or any other place, as long as they accept us, I am grateful. Can you please wait for a bit? I will convince everyone first so it doesn't become troublesome later"

But it must have been strange for me to lower my head, she was surprised and after that she made a bitter smile.

I was treated as a 'unique' person.

Why?

She is a regular customer that buys a lot of my merchandize, and even if she hasn't taken care of me in that aspect, she does her best working day and night.

Well, I don't get it but I am glad for her proposal.

Telling the people beforehand to avoid problems when they arrive there.

That place is originally the place where demi-humans live, is what

Tomoe said and with that in consideration she is not sending people there though.

If the people evacuating have this in mind, the worries will lessen.

[That will help a lot. The academy is already on the move, so I think the situation will be resolved promptly. Please persevere for a bit]

“Of course. I’m sorry for troubling you. It may be late but, I am Ester. Nice to meet you” (Ester)

[Raidou]

We belatedly finish our introductions.

Several minutes passed before Ester-san returned from the crowd.

We began moving to our evacuation point, the slum.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

“Shiki, take those kids and the remaining audience and go ahead first” (Mio)

“Wa? What is Mio-dono going to do?” (Shiki)

“Hm? I remembered some business. If it’s just guiding the people to the evacuation point where the students are, even if it’s only Shiki it will be enough right?” (Mio)

“That’s true but… understood. Then I will be going first” (Shiki)

“I will catch up soon-desu wa” (Mio)

When Jin’s group and the followers of Makoto were going to leave the competition grounds, Mio suddenly told Shiki to go ahead.

Shiki was troubled in asking the reason, but in the end, he agreed.

The distance to the evacuation point he has to guide the students and spectators isn’t that far, moreover, he is going along as a guard.

With just that, the defense power was already at an excessive level.

“Well then…” (Mio)

Mio turns back on her heels and returns to the stage of the competition grounds.

In there, there is – no – there was a meaningful meat lump of a variant.

“My regeneration is on the special side, but maybe because of that, I can feel it. The smell or maybe the breathing of it; the signs of regeneration” (Mio)

After those words directed to no one, Mio makes one big sigh.

When she does so, the lump of meat that was before her eyes began to move as if it concurred.

“Even though the part that served as the nucleus was completely destroyed, how pitiful. As a person that is specialized in regeneration, I don’t want to compare to you but, I will at least praise your vitality-desu wa” (Mio)

The moving lump of meat copies the outline of a hyuman shape.

But the appearance was not that of a hyuman but meat in the shape of a hyuman, and there was no strength detectable like before when it was a variant.

“… It may only be fragments, but I remember. You are a woman of Kuzunoha? Am I still alive?”

“Ara, you can speak? I didn’t expect you to have a personality” (Mio)

“I am Ilumgand Hopelace”

“You were” (Mio)

Mio cuts into the words of the hyuman shaped meat lump.

The lower part of its face swelled and it made words as if coming out from its mouth.

And subsequently, when the upper part vibrated slightly, a horizontal cut is made, and when it opens it up and down, there were eyes there.

“… Was I… played around by those guys? How pathetic. Showing such a shameful behavior and even dirtying my family name!!”

“…”

“I used drugs, turned into a monster, and even with that, I still lost. Kukuku, how unsightly”

“Yeah” (Mio)

“The destruction impulse I was feeling a while ago and the emotions that were welling up and couldn’t control, are so silent right now, as if it was all a lie”

“… The nucleus was destroyed, so it is obvious” (Mio)

Mio already reached to a conclusion as to why he returned to his senses, but without voicing out any details, she narrows her eyes as if examining at the situation.

After that, while recognizing the hyuman shaped thing as Ilumgand Hopelace, she muttered several times. He continued talking to Mio but she just gave short responses or ignored him.

“But with this body of a monster, I should end my life already right? If I didn’t die, my responsibility of carrying the Hopelace household would get heavier. That would increase the burden of the residents in our territory” (Ilumgand)

“… Fuh” (Mio)

The second son noble is already dead.

That’s why, released from his firm convictions, he muttered in a calm tone.

Looking at Ilumgand, whose circumstances Mio practically didn't know at all, talking about responsibility and standpoint, she saw it as humorous.

"It is alright. I don't know how long I will be able to live in this body. In that case, at the very least, I will relay my feelings before dying" (Ilumgand)

Ilumgand didn't show signs of minding the sneer of Mio.

With heavy dragged steps, he walks to where Mio is.

That face was steadily molding into that of when he was a hyuman, but he wasn't able to recreate that appearance perfectly.

The parts of the face were subtly apart from their respective locations, and if anyone saw it, they would feel disgust. Moreover, he had a terrible looking part resembling a keloid.

Even calling him a demi-human would be hard to do. That's how unbalanced and unsightly he was right now.

"That body, it isn't unstable to the point that you have to prepare for death. But do you intent to live as Ilumgand whatever-desu no?" (Mio)

Hearing the information from Mio, the hyuman shape glances at her.

"Hoh, I see. I can live. I have heard something good. I was talking about relaying my feelings, but don't worry. I won't lay a hand to Gotetsu or Ruria anymore. Why I wonder? Even though I was so stuck into it. I am choosing my ideals over my deep affection to her"

"Hm? Gotetsu, Ruria?" (Mio)

"I will fight. If I clad my whole body in armor, I can hide this unsightly body. Even if I am unable to realize my ideals basking in the sunlight, I will at least be able to serve as a shield for Hibiki-sama. I can still do that. When thinking that way, I even feel happy about having this giant unsightly body" (Ilumgand)

“N, Hibiki? Did you say Hibiki just now?” (Mio)

Hearing a familiar name being said, Mio asks again.

“… Yeah. It’s the hero-sama that descended to Limia. If it is that person, she will definitely be able to overthrow the demon race. And then, the people will be able to do their own roles, and be able to follow their own dreams. She will realize that kind of peaceful world” (Ilumgand)

“Ah, so you were talking about the hero-desu no. Then it is a different person from the Hibiki I know-desu wa ne. To think that the hero has the same name as her, how pitiful. The hero in Limia is named Hibiki?” (Mio)

“That’s right. You have an acquaintance named Hibiki? In Lorel that kind of name isn’t unusual, so it isn’t impossible. Well then, see you. We probably won’t meet again” (Ilumgand)

The hyuman shape with the memories of Ilumgand passes by the side of Mio. Without looking back at her, he tries to leave the stage.

“Right. I only intended to exterminate you, but since the memories of the original person are acting as the base, this is a pleasant surprise-desu wa ne. It will serve as punishment” (Mio)

The hyuman shape tried to turn when he heard the voice of Mio at his back, but he was unable to.

Because he couldn’t to put strength into the legs that supported his body and fell down.

Prostrating on the ground, he bended his neck towards her. The hyuman shape with the memories of Ilumgand learned about what was done to him.

“My legs are… You, what are you doing?” (Ilumgand)

What did she do?

He didn’t know how it was done, but looking at the result, he could tell.

Both legs were severed.

From knees down, it was cut off.

Because he doesn't feel pain, he didn't scream. The expression of the hyuman shape had no pain reflected in it either.

"What, you say? Punishment-desu wa" (Mio)

Mio didn't show much change. Slowly shrinking the distance she has between the hyuman shape.

"Kugh?! I already don't have any intentions in harming your company or Raidou as Ilumgand"

"So?" (Mio)

"So, you say?"

"Yeah. You troubled Waka-sama so much and said abusive words to him-desu wa ne? I understand what you want to do, but your atonement comes first-desu wa" (Mio)

"Atonement?"

"Yes, atonement. It is simply the order of things. You were hostile to Waka-sama, antagonized him, interfered, and rampaged against the students of Waka-sama. Then after being defeated, you are not even a hyuman anymore" (Mio)

"…"

"See? You haven't atoned for your actions towards Waka-sama. You were only defeated. But right now – maybe a miracle happened – you have retained your memories, personality, and recovering the ownership of your body; you are still alive. Your soul and core that you were composed of were clearly destroyed, and yet, you are still able to act as a hyuman" (Mio)

"… But I am already…"

The hatred he had towards Raidou, the hostility he directed at Jin's

group; those things were already gone.

Why did he do something so stupid that resembled the nobles he hated so much?

‘Even if I wasn’t sane, there was nothing but shame’ is what the hyuman shape was thinking.

“Your defeat and your current appearance isn’t retribution. It is just the result of your own weakness. Ah, maybe you should think about it this way? You were given a miracle ‘for the sake of atonement’” (Mio)

“What… are you saying? Also, my current self has nothing that can be given as atonement. Nothing… But if it’s an apology, I will put my hands down and apologize to Raidou and the students”

“I am fine with your life-desu wa” (Mio)

“?!”

“An amendment death. It won’t suffice by a lot, but since it was a miracle, I will forgive you with just that. If you have a wish, disappear with the regret of being unable to fulfill it” (Mio)

The hyuman shape trembles heavily.

Because Mio smiled.

An innocent smile, with a glaze that one would be charmed with.

Despite that.

In the memories of the hyuman shape, it was a smile that brought forth an extreme intensity he has never seen in his whole life.

“!!”

A dull shock resounded in its body, and the hyuman shape looks at its own stomach.

There’s a big hole there.

Mio's index finger and middle finger were pointed at the hyuman shape.

"Impossible. The resistance to magic in my body…"

"It has gotten stronger-desu wa ne. I intended to get rid of every trace of you with that one attack though. I am a bit surprised that you even have resistance to the darkness element. Maybe you obtained it with that miracle of yours. For the sake of thoroughly tasting this atonement" (Mio)

"… Raidou, does he hate me that much?! Is it because I hated him that he hates me too?!"

A shock resounds once again.

This time a hole opened in its chest.

"Waka-sama, at you? Ufufu, when one surpasses stupidity, there's also a cute side to it-desu no ne. Waka-sama doesn't even think of you as a pebble. That death of yours, and obviously that so called interest in you, he has none of those" (Mio)

"?!! T-Then why are you…?"

If it's not Raidou's orders, why is Mio doing something like this?

The hyuman shape didn't understand.

"Isn't that obvious? Because I can't forgive you. If it's Waka-sama's order, I would even save you, but I didn't receive any such order. I do think that Shiki received an order of incapacitating you, but that was something that happened before you died" (Mio)

"But he did order it right?! Then"

The hyuman shape already understood.

The outcome.

No, this wasn't even a match to begin with.

It understood that there would be no way to escape from this on its own.

The regeneration didn't show signs of beginning.

Those two holes in its body were telling the hyuman shape the difference in power like never before.

"But… Waka-sama didn't say anything special even when you died. That was because 'there's no helping it if he died', that's the extent of what he thought, right? In that case, it is fine to just make it as if the miracle regeneration never happened. There's no problem-desu wa" (Mio)

"I… can't die. In this kind of place, even if it's a life given by chance-!!"

Stomach, chest; and then, after the two fingers of Mio were pointed at the head of the hyuman shape, a dull shock resounds in the stage.

In that place that's already desolate, no one would see it.

All the remaining people and the students already went along with Shiki towards the evacuation point. And she knew that very well.

"Limia, Hibiki… how pitiable. To only have that level of power and hold the same name as the hero, that girl is misfortunate-desu wa ne. When I meet her again, I will recommend her to change her job to chef" (Mio)

Finishing the disposal of the thing that was once Ilumgand, Mio left the competition grounds and was about to head towards the place Shiki is, but she suddenly stops.

Because she recalled the conversation with the hyuman shape.

The name that remains in her memories, Hibiki.

Mio recalled the black haired girl that said came from Limia.

But that was only for a moment.

She had to return to where her master ordered her to be. She rejoined Shiki.

Chapter 143: If it's 3 days, it's still fine

It has been 3 days since then.

Academy Town is still in chaos.

The turmoil caused by the variants that's believed to be the deed of the demon race, in the end, from the first day till today, the variants continued their advance with their purpose still unknown.

In the first day I passed a night at one of the evacuation points, the demi-human's slum.

At night we all reunited to exchange information, but there was no especially important information, if there's one thing, it would be about the company's circulation of goods method. Looks like Root is going to do something about it. That's what I heard from Tomoe.

At the second day, the situation moved into a bad direction.

There were two big points.

The first one is that the communication network of the town has stopped working. The information from the surrounding towns couldn't be relayed anymore and since there's no response from the calls in this side, it has turned into a situation where it is unknown if it has actually reached or not.

Even if one tries to do thought transmission inside the town, you have to be in a close range or it won't reach. If the person doing the transmission is skilled, it will reach for about 1 or 2 kilometers; if both sides are skilled, it will reach about 3 kilometers. That's how the situation has deteriorated into.

Thinking about the wideness of the town, it is quite the harsh

situation. It's a situation where it will be hard to even consider exchanging information with the neighboring towns.

Well, if there are really skilled thought transmission users in the Academy side, it might be possible.

From what I heard of Tomoe, because of this, the Academy's movements have grown a lot duller, so the thought transmission jamming is showing clear effects.

From what Shiki told me, the reason is because of the good amount of magic devices that are set up in various places around town.

He showed me one and it was pretty small. It is cylinder shaped with a size close to that of a 500 ml pet bottle.

A large quantity of them are set up in town and outside of it as well. It seems their main purpose is jamming the thought transmissions.

Looks like they were for quite some time in places like: inside pillars, below the floor, buried in the ground; in a lot of places. 'And before they were activated, they showed no reaction so were unable to detect them', is what Shiki and Lime apologized for.

If they were able to detect devices before they are activated, that would be pretty impressive.

The moment I heard about this, I was impressed by the demon race who probably took quite a long time to thoroughly set up these devices.

They must have done this through task laboriously. How diligent.

For some reason, I imagined an epic domino line.

I felt like destroying all the dominos, but I restrain myself.

Just like how the demon race can use their thought transmission in this, we are also able to normally use our thought transmission.

Looks like it only blocks the normal thought transmission.

In this place, it is impossible to intercept the contents of our thought transmission, and we also have methods to code the important contents; so, from now on, we are perhaps the only power that can use thought transmission properly.

‘That’s why, if you want to destroy the devices, I want you to do so after we have finished our moves’ is what Tomoe said.

The other point is the increase in variants.

The reason being, there were some people that were involved with the variant incident and transformed in the evacuation points. In other words, danger appears in the places of evacuation. A bad situation.

That means there were quite the amount of people using the demon race’s drug.

Could it be, the demon race was spreading them around randomly?

Whichever it is, instead of calling the chaos as the objective, it is more like the intention of this is to damage Academy Town.

At noon of the first day, I talked with all of my followers and compute all the people that have a similar necklace to that of Ilumgand.

To pinpoint the cause.

One of the reasons may be because they are in a stressful place like a shelter, and because of that, their spirit becomes unstable and several have turned into a variant just like Ilumgand.

Being in a situation where they are unable to use thought transmission might be one of the reasons as well.

To reduce the damage, I notified the employees to confiscate those accessories, and reduced the damage of the evacuation points we were stationed in.

Regarding the Mist Lizards that are following Rembrandt-san, I have received reports from them about the safety of the couple and

a rough summary of the situation in the merchant guild.

By the second day, the people that have experience fighting mamonos, bodyguards, and people like mercenaries were gathered and organized as units. Looks like they began moving to remove the danger of the variants.

I have received reports saying that they moved on the offensive instead of defensive mostly thanks to the influence of the Rembrandt couple.

The Guild Representative that went on the offensive, gathered the company representatives, the employees, and the people related to the guild, and proposed the idea of creating units to protect the town.

Maybe he proposed this because of the losses of the stores, products and even the merchants itself. Or maybe that was his true character. I don't really know.

Sadly, there's also plundering targeted at the stores that are still okay.

Maybe because my store and the ones in the surroundings were destroyed, when I heard the report, even when knowing it was imprudent, a part of me felt relieved that there were also other stores that were suffering damages from it. I am the worst.

At the night meeting of the second day, it was made clear that there were around 80 inside the town. And that variants appeared in several evacuation points that were not under the supervision of the Kuzunoha Company and were destroyed.

There probably wasn't anyone who was able to fight in those places.

The Academy's support was not directed at the evacuation points, but to the extermination of variants, so in the cases where a new variant appears, if they are unable to defend themselves, the evacuation point will collapse from the inside.

Did Rona calculate all this factors when she caused this uproar?

To estimate so many factors, that's impressive.

There's the chance that she seriously thought of destroying the town.

Also, from the Academy side, the Purple Coats and a part of the teachers made up units and are moving by the orders of the Academy Principal. It looks like they have succeeded in defeating several variants already.
Well, the numbers have increased, but since they are slowly rallying back, it can also be considered a good sign.

Because once a way to deal with them has been established, the efficiency in which they defeat the variants will increase.

The assistance of the various countries and the dispatch of troops are planned to be arriving, at its fastest, tomorrow into the surrounding towns, and the day after tomorrow they will enter Rotsgard.

Just that, since they are unable to confirm their arrival through thought transmission, this is only the case if the reinforcements began preparing since day one.

In the middle of it, the big-shots called for Tomoe and suggested her to provide support to the transportation of goods and soldiers.

I see, it is certainly understandable after being shown such convenient teleportation.

If it was me, I would have nodded, but the one who interacted with them was Tomoe and Root was at her side.

Regarding the long-distance teleportation magic, they explained something logical sounding and told them that it would be difficult.

There's a usage limit to the short katana. When released and used, one is unable to use it for all of that day, and if the usage is forced, there's the fear of breaking.

There are many things that can be done when placing the effect on an object huh.

They were able to think up such a setting with ad-lib. Long lived Dragons are impressive.

Seeing their wide field of vision when moving, I realize my own insufficiency.

And then, from what Tomoe said, today we are finally beginning to move.

When this uproar is finished, there will be several other problems waiting for me. Like: the Merchant Guild and the Limia Prince Joshua.

Even so, these stagnated days are better than the days where I just waited.

Unlike the people that are taking refuge, we are able to use thought transmission, so we don't feel any threat, and moreover, moving moderately into Asora is making even me feel slightly stressed in this enclosed situation.

"'…In this enclosed situation', done. I feel like it is long for a 3 day journal, but since we are right now in an eventful situation, it should probably be something like this. It's not like we will be showing this to someone anyways" (Makoto)

It's quite abridged, but if it works as a memo, that's fine.

I leave the room that the demi-humans prepared for me in the slum.

"Ah, Raidou-san. Today is quiet. There's no uproar worth mentioning right now"

When I left the room, a cat that has about the same height as a hyuman and stood vertically, talked to me.

He is the person that is in charge of this slum, and because we have a connection through the company's medicine, we are relatively close.

Most of the time he uses Akua and Eris as intermediaries, and there are times when we both talk in person.

It looks like he comes to our store frequently, so he can be considered a regular customer of our place.

It seems being in the slum doesn't mean he doesn't have money. He is poor, but it in terms of a living, he is somehow earning it.

"Good morning. It is great that the friction between hyumans is disappearing" (Makoto)

"The conflict wasn't as bad as I thought it would to be. Well, it's still dangerous out there though"

"It looks like that part will soon return to how it was before" (Makoto)

"There are some monsters there that are hard to detect, so we can't lower our guards. I want this tense days to come to an end quickly"

"With this as the spark, it would be nice if the hyumans change their opinions of you guys" (Makoto)

"That's impossible. They are a race that's loved by the Goddess, and we are the ones standing below them. A thought that has been engraved will not change easily. Hyumans will probably come to give us donations for a while, but I think that in time it will return to how it was before"

The cat, whose name is Bor, is still young, but with his mature face he makes a lonely smile.

What a farsighted person.

"'Once it passes through the throat, you will forget the heat of it' huh" (Makoto)

"Hm?" (Bor)

"No, it's nothing" (Makoto)

"Lately, I have been thinking if we could try using our strengths to connect it to work. If we were to create a relationship with a part of the hyumans here and were able to make a connection where we

both benefit from, this turmoil and its bad memories could be rewritten. For us that is" (Bor)

"Right. Today I will be heading out with Akua and Eris. Just in case, I will be leaving a few here, so if you have anything to tell me, please tell the people that remained here" (Makoto)

"… Outside. Understood. Be careful" (Bor)

The ears and whiskers of the cat twitched and showed surprise at my words.

Umu, a cat, nice.

"Yeah, you too" (Makoto)

Being slightly refreshed, I leave the half crumbled building.

(Akua, Eris, we are heading to the Academy) (Makoto)

I use thought transmission.

It wasn't a conversation but an instruction.

With a speed that resembles that of an Oniwaban, two shadows appear in front of me.

"Good morning, Waka-sama. Today we are shifting to offensive, right?" (Akua)

"Good morning. There's no presence of variants in the surroundings. It's safe" (Eris)

The words of Eris that were practically screaming 'I have been working' are kind of doubtful.

She is not the type of girl that would lie in this kind of things, so I am not suspecting the contents though.

"I see. Good job. We are meeting with the Academy Principal and joining the suppression" (Makoto)

"Shiki-sama and Mio-sama too, right?" (Akua)

“What extravagant members” (Eris)

“It’s fine for you guys to just hide and be on alert of the surroundings. If there’s anything, tell me with thought transmission” (Makoto)

“Yes”

Before the other countries intervene, we will show our presence to a certain extent. That’s the most important point it seems.

Well, for me, safety is what’s most important.

Avoid the battles that can be avoided.

Treasure your life.

If I end up dying, I might even drag the residents that live in Asora along with me. Even if the danger of dying is a one in a million, I will still fight with defense as the priority. That’s how I decided it to be.

When I clearly understand how deep my connection is with Asora, I can probably change my way of acting, but for now that’s not the case.

The Forest Oni combi disappear once again.

Well then, let’s go.

“Kuzunoha’s master!”

…

Who is it?

A voice stops me when I was walking to the exit.

This is a name that many people in this place use to call me.

When I turn back, there is a woman I got to know not that long ago.

[Ah, good morning Ester-san. You look healthy]

“Good morning. Even if it’s written, that’s pretty stiff you know. You don’t need to be formal with someone like me. It would make me formal too” (Ester)

[Sorry. It’s in my nature]

Or more like, I am mostly like this with hyumans.

Saying it in a good way, polite.

In a bad way, indifferent.

Anyways, I am used to talking with others in a business-like manner.

I was thinking about joining the hyuman society, but I am beginning to lose my drive to do so.

What is it, this feeling?

“Hmph～. Ah, the reason why I stopped you. The accessory you told us to collect yesterday, is it better to collect them if we see them today as well?” (Ester)

[Right. Those might be one of the reasons of this turmoil. It’s not assured until the Academy investigates into it in detail though]

“Understood. We will do so. And, today you are going outside?” (Ester)

[This place has calmed down, so I am heading to the Academy to confirm the current situation of the town and the state of the students]

“It’s impressive that you are able to say something like that so easily. There may be no need to tell you but, there’s only one life. Pride and conceitedness will only lead to reducing your lifespan. Be careful” (Ester)

[Thank you for your worry. Well then, I will leave things here to you]

“Also, when this finishes safely, I will talk with my boss about you. It will probably be advantageous for you” (Ester)

[It is embarrassing since we are a small company, but please do tell that person]

The boss of the brothels. The only thing that comes to mind is a yakuza or the mafia.

Is it really okay to introduce me to such an underground person?

Well, if I have Tomoe or Shiki with me, there won’t be any mess up.

Lowering my head, I end my conversation with Ester.

When I head to the exit of the slums, I tell the demi-humans that are wearing simple armor about my reason for going outside, and enter the street.

It has only been a few days and it has been quite stormy.

When I perk up my ears, I can hear the sounds of fighting and screams.

Maybe because it has been like a daily thing, at the third day I am already used to it.

The anxiety that’s spreading through the residents is mostly caused by the fact that they don’t understand the situation and that there’s no way to know when they could get attacked.

I can normally use thought transmission to understand the situation, and with the help of Akua and Eris telling me, I am able to avoid the variants and the Academy’s corps.

That’s why I don’t really feel much anxiety in this situation.

It is the improvement of the thought transmission that didn’t work when I was summoned by the Goddess. I’m glad we made this improvements.

Thinking about it, an emergency situation where cellphones can’t

be used would also create panic in the modern world.

Or more like, instead of anxiety, I am actually feeling cheerful.

The students have heard the words of praise by the Limia King from Shiki, so I want to hear in person how happy they were.

With the information that I receive from Akua and Eris, I circumvent the variants and the hyumans while continuing my steps towards the Academy.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

“Temporary teacher Raidou! You bastard, why weren’t you in the Academy in this emergency situation?!”

[My apologies. I heard from a follower of mine that the Academy Principal was moving to suppress the variants, so I gathered my employees that were safe and was evacuating the residents]

“Idiot! If the variants are taken down, there should be no need to care for the residents! Where’s the need for you, a teacher – even if temporary – to help in the evacuation?! You are in a position where you have to obey my orders aren’t you?!”

[Yes. It was my own arbitrary decision. We are in a situation where we can’t properly use thought transmission, so even if late, I personally came to the Academy]

The place where the Academy Principal is.

The basement of the Academy’s courtyard. It is a secure shelter.

It doesn’t have much space to fit many people, but in exchange, there’s various equipment set up to grasp the situation outside.

It’s like the command room in emergency situations.

Looks like the guests that were evacuated are all here.

There are also several rooms to reside in, so it seems they are living in those.

In the room there's other teachers and a number of staffs necessary for the management of this place.

As expected, there are some thought transmission users here that are skilled to communicate with the corps. The communication is passing without pause.

And in there, I am currently being shouted at.

With such force that I was wondering if the Academy Principal would burst a blood vessel. He wasn't showing any signs of returning to normal and was looking down on me like the Merchant guild representative.

But I didn't get flustered like that time and was just letting his anger slip by.

Main reason is because I understand what I should do, and that getting impatient will not bring forth anything.

I even had the leeway to think: 'if you are going to shout at me, do it after we go to another room. Wouldn't this bother the other people?'

"Two of the surrounding towns have gone completely silent. Is it because the people that can use thought transmission have died, or because they have been wiped out? We still don't know. Listen, this is the worst situation Academy Town has faced since its foundation! And yet, you… you bastard just!!"

Just how much is this old geezer expecting from a temporary teacher?

It is obvious that I would be counted as part of their strength since I am a temporary teacher, but to get so angry over it.

Could it be, he is thinking that since my students were able to fight that well against a variant, I should be strong enough to wipe out the variants? I don't think his thoughts go that far though.

If he really does expect me to have strength surpassing that of my students and he is so angered by me not being at his disposition,

that's maybe because his purple corps are showing much more casualties than the military gains?

I haven't heard much details regarding that, so I will ask later.

There should be teachers that weren't even able to arrive at the Academy and died on the way, and there should be teachers that have run away long ago. If the latter get fired, they wouldn't be able to complain about it, but the ones that died, I feel like he is the type that would kick their corpses.

I'm glad I only left Tomoe at this place.

If I left Mio, I would have to soothe her later and that's very difficult to do.

I wanted to meet the students too so I had Mio and Shiki tell them that I would go there later and had them in standby at one of the student dormitories.

It seems that they were faced with several outbreaks of variants, but I received reports that they were able to dispose of them secretly without any problems.

Also that there were some send to Asora as samples.

5 of them have been send, so that should be enough.

"Academy Principal, he evacuated us and on top of that he passed through the dangerous middle school garden to get here. Please leave the reprimands at that"

"?!! Oh, Princess Lily and even Sairitz-dono. That's unusual"

The angry words of the Academy Principal stop.

When I look, there were two people I knew standing side by side.

"I encountered the princess by chance. Academy Principal, I also ask of you. Right now, instead of reprimanding his actions, it is of more importance to have him cooperate in resolving this situation" (Sairitz)

“Of course, I understand that. But as the one managing the Academy, I couldn’t overlook his thoughtless actions”

When you were evacuating, you weren’t even thinking about me.

Weren’t you more concerned about escaping?

Right now she is not here, but you even had your secretary lend you her shoulder.

Is it because the progress of the battle isn’t going favorably? The Academy Principal is being quite short tempered.

If he was like this from the very beginning, I can’t see him as a person capable of managing the elite academy. If he only has power and authority, and is in an unfitting position, then I would feel more familiarity with him… well, not really.

He is probably in the side that repudiates races. At the very least, he doesn’t give me the feeling of wanting to help him.

“Please, can’t you do it for us?”

“Please”

“… If the two of you go that far, understood. Temporary teacher Raidou”

[Yes]

“I will put you and your employees in charge of the northeast section of Rotsgard. Okay? Show me that you can restore your honor”

[I will definitely meet your expectations]

“Those students that have been sleeping and have been of no use since that fight as well. If they are awake, I permit you to use them too”

[… Understood]

He is a person that says more than necessary.

I was slightly pissed by that.

It's not like Jin and the others are in bad shape or anything.

Even Amelia was completely healed by Shiki at that day.

With one day of rest, they should have plenty enough energy to move.

I wasn't expecting the Academy Principal to tell me that directly, but I had Shiki and Mio read the atmosphere of the place and put Jin and the others to sleep whenever a part of the students went on rampages or the teachers went on rampage, so that they don't end up fighting them.

By the way, I gave them permission to do that.

Just in case, when those kids or the others felt like they were going to slip out and join the battle.

After this, I was planning on going there and waking them up.

I lower my head at the Academy Principal that leaves.

Northeast.

Merchant Guild all of a sudden huh.

I think it is a zone with pretty high importance.

If he wants us to handle that area, instead of calling it harassment by sending us to a dangerous place, it is more like he is running out of options.

The academy related facilities that the Academy is putting their priority in liberating are already filling their hands huh.

It looks like it is really a bad situation.

Tomoe also waited quite a while.

When I look at her, Tomoe noticed my gaze and silently lowers her head.

Just that.

With her personality, I thought she would come do some frivolous talk. Ah, that's because there's these two here.

[Princess Lily, and also Sairitz-sama. Thank you very much]

"No need for thanks. You have also helped us after all. If possible, I would want to tell the empire's hero about this, but there's no signs of the signal reaching. I feel very guilty about not being able to do anything for this town's residents. At that time the thought transmission was still working, but right now I don't know about the situation" (Lily)

"Raidou-dono has helped us after all, don't worry about it. On our side as well, if only the thought transmission was able to connect… The dragon unit reinforcements and the supplies should be arriving by tomorrow but…" (Sairitz)

… I see.

The reason for the waiting is coming to fruition soon huh.

Tomoe suddenly told us to move today most likely because of Sairitz-san's dragon unit that's supposed to be coming tomorrow.

[I will do my best so that both of you will not be wounded in Rotsgard. No need to worry]

"Your words make me happy, Raidou. I would like to talk with you once, before going back to the Empire. When things get calmer, can you?" (Lily)

The princess-sama of the country where the hero is huh.

The Limia King's way of talking felt as if he had been quite influenced by the hero.

Is this person the same?

I feel like her way of talking to me politely is Japanese-like but… meeting her alone, I don't think I would be able to stand it.

Ah, that's right.

[Of course. I will be bringing along my close aide Tomoe to meet you, Princess-sama]

"… Yeah… I will be looking forward to it" (Lily)

Great.

If I bring someone she already knows like Tomoe, there's no worries for awkward silences.

"Raidou-dono, the things called variants are scary opponents that even the Academy's elites are having a hard time with. Please be careful" (Sairitz)

[There's Tomoe too, so it's okay. She is really strong after all. Thanks for worrying, Sairitz-sama]

"You are going to bring her too?" (Sairitz)

[The Academy Principal told me to use my employees as well. Tomoe is a reliable subordinate]

"That's true. In these few days, we were able to live without worries. It's not good to retain her for so long. I will be praying for your well return, Raidou-dono" (Sairitz)

[Well then, let's go Tomoe]

"Yes" (Tomoe)

When I leave the basement, the brightness dazzles me for a second.

There's light down there, but as expected, it is completely different from the light of the outside.

While my eyes were getting accustomed, I head in quick pace to the student dormitory that's being used as a refuge.

“It’s a good start. Well then, let’s call for Mio and Shiki and have them put everything in order” (Tomoe)

[Right]

“Also, you were calm when talking with the Academy Principal. There was an unexpected lifeboat, but it was superb. I also think that it was a good move having me accompany you when meeting the Empire’s princess” (Tomoe)

[For some reason I was able to calmly deal with it. I am fine if you tell me after the northeast sweeping begins, I want to you to tell me about the explanation you gave them of the teleportation again. I want to match our ideas]

“Understood” (Tomoe)

If there’s a mess up, I am pretty sure it would be from my part after all.

I have to review as much as I can.

[I am looking forward to the picture you and Root created]

There will definitely be scary parts in it, that I believe won’t become a plus for me.

If I am going to use power, I also have to accept things like this.

“Leave it to me. For now, think about how you will act towards the merchant guild. I will be looking forward to an interaction like the one from just now” (Tomoe)

[I will do my best]

I am headed to the northeast, so I won’t be able to avoid it.

I will be encountering the representative again, no, I will be meeting with Rembrandt-san. Let’s think about it in a positive way.

I thought of seeing the state of the students and meeting with the Rembrandt couple when I was leaving the slum. Both of those will

be achieved, so it is a good omen.

The counter-attack begins not at the fourth day when the reinforcements arrive, but in the third day. In other words, a turning point.

Let's engrave in the minds of the people of this town the memory of Kuzunoha Company.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

The atmosphere of the student dormitory wasn't that different from the other evacuation points.

Many students are in the spacious lobby.

A part are outside working around the vicinity, but a sense of fatigue was drifting about in the whole area.

Counting Jin and the others that are sleeping, there's Shiki and Mio in the place that's used to nurse and treat the injured.

I stop them when they tried to come to where I am, and along with Tomoe, I go to where they are.

[Good work, Shiki, Mio. Looks like the students are quite tired]

"Waka-sama. Yesterday several became variants, so the people were unable to return to their own rooms. Today everyone seems to be feeling stressed" (Shiki)

"I was bored-desu wa. Crying 'Are we going to be okay?' 'Are we going to be okay?' over and over like broken toys" (Mio)

[Mio, try to choose your words a little. This kind of incident is a first, so it can't be helped that they are uneasy]

"S-Sorry" (Mio)

I warn her a bit for her bitter words.

It looks like not many people here have the energy to complain, but

I want to avoid pointless animosity.

“Well, that will end today-ja. You two, are you ready?” (Tomoe)

The two nod at Tomoe’s words.

[Then can you wake up Jin and the others? I want to talk with them for a bit]

“They have already woken up some time ago. Their body is a bit dull right now, but having them half-asleep when talking to Waka-sama would be troublesome” (Shiki)

Shiki, you work fast.

Now that I think about it, instead of waking them up when I arrive, it is more efficient if they are already awake.

Even so, I came here to where these two are, but I don’t see the faces of my students.

[Then, where are they right now?]

“Over there. Their condition is being checked. I think they will be returning soon” (Shiki)

[I see. Then, everyone please stay here. Prepare so that we can leave as soon as possible. I will go talk to them for a bit]

Saying so, I confirm the consent of all my followers.

Talking with people wearing white robe, I move to a place where there are familiar faces.

[It’s been a while, Jin, everyone]

“Sensei!”

Oooh, they synched perfectly.

Their timing was exact.

[I heard you were sleeping for three days. How’s everyone’s

condition?]

“We are already fine. To think that we would be sleeping for 3 days, I can’t believe it”

“How’s the situation? It looks like it is not the same as ever though”

“I can’t get in touch with my family. Do you know anything about that Sensei?”

From each mouth, I was poured by questions from my students.

Instead of telling them about the situation, I first have to clearly place what must be done.

Or more like, Daena has a wife and child.

Are they okay?

I forgot about that.

[Calm down. You have woken up, but you have been sleeping for 3 days. To suddenly move today is akin to suicide. There are still variants appearing outside. The situation is still in a deadlock]

“…”

[The subjugation corps of the Academy are currently advancing. In other words, the current situation is that students are still restricted from going outside. You were able to get out alive, so obediently stay here]

Hmph…

Daena and the Rembrandt sisters are in quite the bad state.

Their faces show that they totally want to move out.

[You can’t, the three over there]

“?!”

[Sif, Yuno, your family is okay. Don’t worry and just stay here

healing the dullness in your body. Daena, I will investigate about your family. Don't go moving on your own convenience. You have received words of praise from the Limia King. Try to calm down a bit]

'Were you happy?' Is something I can't ask in this atmosphere.

I want them to calm down a bit by remembering the words of praise from the King.

"But… the town is still being destroyed by those guys right?!" (Jin)

Jin.

Seriously. When I admonish one, another stands up.

This is troublesome.

I originally intended to put the students as guards here as an excuse, but I feel like that would increase the work of Akua and Eris.

I was planning on leaving only one, but maybe I should leave both of them.

[Do you want to go?]

"… Yes. Even we can be a bit of use. We were able to fight with Ilumgand" (Jin)

[Then if in that time this place is attacked or a new variant appears, everyone here will be slaughtered. A student turned into a variant yesterday you know?]

"!!"

[I have to head to the northeast section by the Academy Principal's orders. Jin, even with that, you still want to go?]

"… I will stay" (Jin)

[N?]

“I will stay! If we all cooperate we will somehow, no, definitely do something about it!” (Jin)

[How reliable. I will leave it to you. If you guys do well, I will tell Limia King about your great efforts. Well then, later]

(Akua, Eris, I am sorry, but please protect this dormitory. If Jin and the others leave, I don’t mind which, please have one of you accompany them) (Makoto)

(Understood)

(Roger)

I will leave the perception to Shiki.

I return to where Tomoe, Mio and Shiki are.

[Sorry for the wait. Let’s go. Shiki, sorry but, I will be counting on you to watch out the surroundings]

(Also, can you please investigate the state of Daena’s wife and child? I totally forgot) (Makoto)

I tell them the outline and the latter half I say it in thought transmission.

“Understood” (Shiki)

(I have already confirmed that. In the competition grounds that is being secretly protected by the Arkes, they are taking refuge together with Eva and Ruria) (Shiki)

… Incredible.

He still has the mindset of recognizing strength, so I don’t think it is that far yet, but he is showing changes in his way of thinking towards weak people.

No matter how strong people are, they are all equals and hold rights.

That was the way I thought until now.

Of course, I don't intend to blame them for being powerless to violence. Just that when the people that spend their time polishing other technical skills aside from power are trampled down by violence, I began to think that it just can't be helped.

It's stupid.

A power that I received from a God and a strong body I obtained from enduring a harsh environment.

I was also a kid that had no other good point aside from archery, and yet, here I am thinking this way.

This power of mine was given by someone else.

But I can't stop thinking this way.

At times I am confused by my own thoughts.

That's why I am honestly grateful and surprised at Shiki who humanely made a follow-up for me who didn't remember the family of my student.

Truly grateful.

[Well then, let's go. First is the merchant guild]

It seems Rembrandt-san hasn't used the Mist Lizards to attack.

In those 3 days the Rembrandt couple are in good health. The Mist Lizards are doing a good job protecting them.

Looking at the destruction of the variants, I head to the place that has suffered a bitter experience.

Chapter 144: 5.45x39mm bullet

Important announcement:

I might be getting a new job and this might affect the speed of my translations.

Extermination match.

In our way to the Guild, that's exactly how it was.

I didn't really give out orders of incapacitating them, so while I was listening to Tomoe; Mio and Shiki were literally crushing the variants that tried to attack us.

"It's like a 5.45x39mm bullet mowing them down" (Makoto)

Without thinking, I blurted out those words.

"The so called revenge goddess Kalashnikov, right?" (Shiki)

It was a monologue, and yet for some reason, Shiki reacted.

Why does Shiki know something like that?

And he is wrong to top it off.

"Goddess?" (Mio)

Even Mio reacted.

Looks like this one reacted to the word Goddess.

"Shiki that is not the name of a Goddess. It denotes a type of weapon called gun. A Kalashnikov rifle, I just don't understand what you are saying" (Makoto)

“Hoh, I see. I totally thought it was a name” (Shiki)

In the books that were recreated there were quite a lot of manga.

But I didn’t expect Shiki to read those.

“Mio, when he said Goddess he didn’t mean that Goddess, so don’t mind it. I don’t know what she is busy with, but Root said she is busy” (Makoto)

I look at Tomoe.

“I don’t know the reason, but it seems she doesn’t have the time to be concerned about us” (Tomoe)

I think this is quite the event though.

As I thought, her way of thinking is less understandable than that of Rona.

Soon we will reach the guild.

Until now we have defeated 15 variants.

From what Shiki has detected, the corps from the Merchant Guild are fighting several variants right now. It seems the Guild itself hasn’t received any attack worth mentioning.

As long as we are going with the suppression pretext, there’s no real need to avoid the variants. We kill the ones that come, so there should be few variants remaining in this area.

“Shiki, how many variants remaining?” (Makoto)

“Excluding the ones currently in battle, there’s only 6 left” (Shiki)

“Waka-sama, if you so wish, I can go there and clean it out” (Mio)

“Thanks Mio, but its fine. We are only doing this in context, so there’s no need to mind it” (Makoto)

I calm down the itching Mio and we head to the Guild.

A question suddenly sprung in my head.

That Goddess, I wonder what is her name?

It seems she is an acquaintance of Tsukuyomi-sama, so maybe she is a Goddess I know the name of?

No way, what if she is a Goddess that's viewed in a good light?

"Waka, the Lizards are coming to receive us. Looks like Rembrandt is together with them" (Tomoe)

"Tomoe, right now is fine, but you can't call him with no honorifics okay? Also Mio, even if you meet the representative, you can't do anything. Okay?" (Makoto)

"Hehe, don't worry" (Tomoe)

"… Of course-desu wa. Even if he gets attacked, I won't do anything" (Mio)

"Mio, if he gets attacked, save him" (Makoto)

"… Yes" (Mio)

Don't avert your gaze.

How scary, jeez.

Next to Rembrandt-san who is waving his hand, there's the Guild representative Zara-san.

Ah, I feel light dizziness and nausea.

No doubt he is the next person I can't deal with well after the Goddess.

Even so, I can't just not go.

Today is an important day for Kuzunoha Company.

I prepare myself and meet up with them.

[It has been a while. Representative, Rembrandt-san. I'm glad to see that you all are okay. Because of the thought transmission jamming I was late, but by the orders of the Academy Principal, I have come to this northeast section to join the suppression]

"It's been long, Raidou-dono" (Rembrandt)

The first one to talk was Rembrandt-san.

Calling my name, he closed the distance and hugged me tightly.

"… Are my daughters okay? They are not being send out to fight right?!" (Rembrandt)

It was a whisper, but his desperate tone reached my ears.

His breath is tickling!

[Don't worry. Your daughters have not gone to the battlefield. And just like you asked, I have hidden reliable people around them, so it's okay]

With his hug released, I was able to create some space in between him.

It's probably a secret talk between him and me, so I also write small words that only he can see.

In a situation where he can't properly get in contact with his daughters, Rembrandt-san must have been suffering internally.

Sif and Yuno are really loved.

Being hugged by a man doesn't make me happy though.

"… It has been a while, Raidou. If you are appearing here that must mean your store is fine right? If I remember correctly, it was in the middle of the main street" (Zara)

With a pronounced exhaustion in his face, representative Zara talks to me.

Ugh, I can't even deal with his voice.

How pathetic.

[No, it was already destroyed. All of my employees somehow came out fine, but we were securing safety in the evacuation points, so I still don't know the current state of my store]

"… I see. There have been variants that slipped into the evacuation points and have been wiped out. It is great to see that your place was okay" (Zara)

'I-It's great to see'?

Unexpected words came out.

I thought he would come shouting at me like the Academy Principal.

No matter how exhausted he is, isn't this too much of a change?

The representative gave me an impression of being a brash person.

Would he change this much just because the town is being attacked?

Or is he acting to make it look that way?

Did Rembrandt-san do something?

No, in this situation it is probably not necessary.

To exhaust the person that is taking control along with you would be like strangling yourself.

It might be the preparation to get as much reparation as possible from somewhere.

The insurance-like thing of companies is being managed by the Guild, so maybe a place that is higher than this Merchant Guild's branch, or maybe Rotsgard? Cheat it out of someone in this town?

"Hahaha, is the impression too different from last time? This guy

hasn't experienced attacks from outside, so he is tired. On top of that, in this current situation where he is being protected by Hyun-dono and Fia-dono <The Mist Lizards>, he can't make a strong face towards Raidou-dono. Right?" (Rembrandt)

"S-Shut up! But if it's you guys who have such strong mamonos under you, shouldn't those rampaging guys be annihilated a long time ago? Why didn't you guys move until now?" (Zara)

Ah, the expected question came.

It isn't comparable to last time, but his eyes were shining a sharp enquiring light.

"Ah, I forgot to tell you but, I have revealed to this guy that the Mist Lizards are something you lent to me, since he is the top. I thought that way would make the conversation proceed in a smoother manner. Sorry for doing something of my own" (Rembrandt)

Rembrandt-san soon supplemented more information.

Thanks to that, the representative didn't cause much trouble since he knew that I am the master of the Mist Lizards.

Well, as long as he didn't spread it to anyone else, I don't really mind.

Being able to summon Mist Lizards is something that the students taking my class already know anyways.

[The Academy corps were concentrating solely on subjugation. I was in the competition grounds and after a lot happened, I was taking care of one of the evacuation points, but even that evacuation point was in a dangerous situation, so I couldn't expect much from the Academy's elimination of the danger. It was my own decision, but I somehow got in contact with my company's employees and concentrated in guiding the residents to the evacuation points and proceeded to secure those places. It has calmed down one way or another, so today I headed to the academy and after receiving the orders of the Academy Principal, I headed to

this place to participate in the subjugation]

"… I see" (Zara)

[On our way we saw signs of pillaging. How much of the damage has the Merchant Guild grasped?]

"Following this guy's suggestion, we have been confirming the extent of the damage, suppressing the monsters and securing the residents that are okay. I don't know the particulars of the damage, but I understand that it is better to just give up on the merchandize of the stores. Anyways, the military force is overwhelmingly insufficient. We have the gold, but there's already no adventurers or mercenaries that can be hired. Every time a death appears, it chips off our strength. As long as we are unable to make contact with the outside, honestly speaking, there's nothing we can do" (Zara)

Saying 'This guy' and pointing at Rembrandt-san, the representative answers me.

Looks like they are quite cornered.

With that face that even has an unshaved beard, he looks several times older than the time I met him.

I send a glance to Tomoe.

When I do so, she makes a complacent smile, laughs, and then nods, which luckily no one noticed because they weren't paying her attention.

The situation is just as planned huh.

Certainly, even if there's money, if there's no adventurers nor mercenaries to hire, there's no point.

Dying while hugging your money.

It is a situation where not a few merchants have thought this way and ended up like that.

In that case, it would be hard for the current representative Zara to

make composed decisions.

Then Rembrandt-san supporting here was a good decision.

“Seriously, what a troublesome man. Raidou-dono is here so there’s no problem. I am telling you that this kind of thing can’t even be considered a predicament, but you don’t even listen. Even yesterday-“ (Rembrandt)

“Pat! You, shut up” (Zara)

?

Pat?

Ah, he is talking to Rembrandt-san.

If my memory serves right, I have seen a sign about it.

Patrick Rembrandt.

He is Patrick so Pat.

I normally call him Rembrandt-san, so for a moment I was wondering who he was talking about.

When Rembrandt-san was about to reveal a shameful event, the representative shuts him up.

“And well, the merchant guild has accumulated a relative amount of exhaustion Raidou-dono. This guy can still be considered in the decent compared to the merchants inside. The amount of people confused is not low. It’s not something nice to see. And there’s no people there that can serve as an example for Raidou-dono” (Rembrandt)

Rembrandt talks indifferently. There’s no signs of sympathy in his words.

Simple bitter words.

Compared to the many people inside, I am a newbie that just made

a store though.

I don't see this kind of Rembrandt-san that often.

[I am happy to see that I somehow made it in time]

"For a second I thought about having these guys you left with me cooperate with the offensive, but no matter how I asked them, they didn't accept anything besides protecting. I tried going outside myself and see, but they quickly made me go back. It was clear that it would be pointless to try, so I gave up promptly" (Rembrandt)

Ah, I see.

I only told them to protect after all.

It was probably like telling them: 'Don't cooperate unnecessarily'.

They may not be flexible, but they are reliable warriors.

[Then, following your advice, I will be entering the suppression without going inside the Guild. If you are able to get in contact, it is okay to have the mercenaries return]

"… As expected, this really doesn't enter the category of predicament huh" (Rembrandt)

For the first time, Rembrandt-san's expression changed into one of surprise.

[We have already defeated about 15 of them on our way here. And in this section…]

"?!!"

I ignore their surprise.

Stopping my writing, I look at Shiki.

"There's 9 left. Right now there's no other variants appearing" (Shiki)

Understanding my gaze, Shiki answered. Grateful by it, I look back

at Rembrandt-san.

With how things went, I feel like Rembrandt-san would be more reliable than the representative right now.

[That's how it is. There's also an article which has been specified by the Academy as being the reason of the variants appearing. I will be leaving one of my followers to collect those, right Tomoe?]

"?!!!! M-Me?!" (Tomoe)

[She knows the particulars about it, so can Rembrandt-san cooperate as well? And representative Zara too]

"Of course I will cooperate. Is that okay, Zara?" (Rembrandt)

"… Yeah. If this will make those monsters stop appearing from inside, I will happily cooperate" (Zara)

How honest.

When representative Zara is this tired, I feel like I can talk with him.

Well, just like the demi-human Bor said: 'After the crisis passes, people might forget about it after a while', so this is probably a rare state of him.

[Then, we will be excusing ourselves now. We are done here, so we will be going. Let's meet later]

"Raidou-dono, the communication with the units is still cut off. Sorry but, if you find them and they haven't received the order to return, I want you to please tell them directly" (Zara)

[Understood]

A really amazing change.

'Sorry but' he said.

Tomoe, looking back once as if saying she is displeased by this, is

guided by Rembrandt-san. Sorry.

I was puzzled choosing between Shiki or you, but there's the chance that talk about teleportation will be brought, so I thought that Tomoe was a better option.

… If I left Mio, that would be a bit scary.

I silently give my apology to Tomoe.

Let's finish this quickly and meet her afterwards. Right, in the afternoon I should get in contact with the Academy once.

… I thought of something nice.

"Mio, Shiki" (Makoto)

I beckon the two.

The two that were walking slightly ahead of me returned to where I am.

"Counting the ones still fighting, there's 9 variants remaining, right?" (Makoto)

"Yes, no doubt about it" (Shiki)

Shiki nods immediately.

"Then, avoiding the ones that are in the middle of fighting, how about you two do a competition with the remaining 6?" (Makoto)

"?!"

"If you end up in a draw… today's dinner will be Mio's choice lineup, and tomorrow will be Shiki's choice lineup. And, if one of you wins, I will listen to one of your wishes. How about it?" (Makoto)

"… Really? Something like that…" (Shiki)

"W-Waka-sama, you can't take back what you said later okay?!" (Mio)

Eh? Both of them bit harder than I thought they would.

But I gotta tell them that this is only limited to things I can actually do.

“Of course, things I can do. Limit it to something that I can do at that time okay? Like for example… if you want to hear about my previous world, I would like you to limit it to one day. Cooking together as well” (Makoto)

I illustrated Shiki and Mio with things both might want, to make it clearer for them.

“I won’t be asking mean things in my wish. Don’t worry” (Shiki)

“Exactly what Shiki said. Waka-sama, prepare yourself” (Mio)

I wonder why, even though it was short, the words Mio said first and the words she said later felt as if they were contradicting themselves.

Different from Tomoe, the two of them had a rough job of protecting, so I thought of this proposal as a breather of sorts but… maybe I was rash?

While following Shiki to the place where the fight is going on, I felt kinda uneasy.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

“You were pretty docile there, Zara” (Rembrandt)

“… I thought you had turned tame, but let me take it back. What is that about being the strongest in town? That thing, no matter how I look at him, it isn’t merely at that level!!” (Zara)

“I didn’t lie though. In truth, they are the strongest in town after all. In here and in Tsige” (Rembrandt)

In front of Makoto, Rembrandt uses ‘watashi’; but when he talks to representative Zara he uses ‘ore’. On top of that, his way of talking gets slightly rustic and frank. <Watashi = ‘I’ in a polite way – Ore

= ‘I’ in an informal way>

From this, one can tell that their personal relationship is deep.

Looking at Tomoe who is being guided by Rembrandt’s wife inside the Guild, the representative of the Merchant Guild, Zara, glares at his old friend while sweating bullets.

But Rembrandt eludes that gaze.

That look would normally make weak-minded people feel fear, but Rembrandt took it with a cool face.

This kind of face is obviously what one would get if the originally scary face of Zara seriously glares at someone.

But maybe because Rembrandt takes it as a frolic of an old friend, or maybe because he has abnormal nerves; he responded to Zara by saying an irony of lining up two towns, Rotsgard and Tsige, who have completely different natures.

“… The information of Kuzunoha Company is opaque in all senses. I can gather a reasonable amount of info about them, but I can’t see the core at all. I don’t even know the reason why it is gathering the attention of many countries. Its ability in battle as an organization is completely unknown. When I put a logical reason like: ‘they probably don’t have much to show in battle’, they come with this!” (Zara)

“What do you mean by ‘with this’? Hey hey, that’s some terrible sweating there” (Rembrandt)

“They come walking from the Academy with only 4 people and while having a friendly chat as if there’s no crisis going on, they arrived here with no injuries. The units grouped with mercenaries are turning out with deaths and injured every time they go out there you know?! Not a single one of them was showing any sort of nervousness! They came here as if they were going out shopping in a sunny afternoon!” (Zara)

“Kukuku” (Rembrandt)

Hearing the words of Zara that sounded as if a dam had broken inside him, Rembrandt laughs with heartfelt fun.

“What number 1 strongest in town would be able to do something as crazy as that?! There are strong monsters spread around everywhere where one step can mean your death you know?! We were only able to defeat 4 after 3 days; with a group of more than 50 mercenaries! And then he comes and nonchalantly says ‘15’ as if he was walking down a festival before coming here!! I was somehow able to get in contact with my employees? If this were a situation where we can ‘somehow’ get in contact, by now we would be getting supplies from outside!!” (Zara)

“Yeah, you are right” (Rembrandt)

“Why is the kid that got scared after being shouted by me able to walk all the way here with a smile in his face? Those guys, just what in the world are they?” (Zara)

“So that’s why you are sweating that much. Yareyare, aren’t you the one that’s lacking fervor? Where did the man that seized the gambling den from the thief guild go to?” (Rembrandt)

“Don’t lump this together with business. There’s a limit to what merchants can do against people that you can’t communicate with. What the Kuzunoha Company is doing is plain impossible for a company. From my point of view, Raidou and those monsters out there aren’t that different. Why is an obscure group like that in this Academy Town? Just what are those guys, Pat?” (Zara)

“Just as you know, he is a medicine merchant. Registering as a merchant in the Guild of Tsige and making a store here, a chick-in-training, the merchant Raidou-dono” (Rembrandt)

“Pat, stop messing around” (Zara)

“… Just that, the close aides around Raidou-dono: one is a brave woman Tomoe-dono who’s over level 1,500; the black haired girl you just met, Mio-dono, surpasses level 1,500 by a lot; and the other follower under Raidou-dono, Shiki-dono, is most likely a high level that I don’t know of. Just think of Raidou-dono as possessing

the same amount of power as them. Those kind of people are selling medicine" (Rembrandt)

"O-One thousand five hundred? What are you…" (Zara)

"Oops, my tongue slipped. It is confidential information from the adventurer guild you see. It is a well-known secret in Tsige, but in other towns it doesn't even turn into a conversation and it just turns into their levels being unknown. Falz-dono, was it? Looks like they are close with the Adventurer Guild master. You as well, don't go leaking it outside, got it? I don't know what will happen to you if you do" (Rembrandt)

"Y-You just arbitrarily told me!!" (Zara)

Zara's whole body trembled heavily.

When he was talking with Raidou – Makoto -, he was still able to interact with him with a firm mentality even when exhausted.

That's because of his pride as the Guild's head.

But in reality, he was internally in shock, awe and fear.

He is the person that has been entrusted with the managing of the Merchant Guild.

He is able to calmly take the situation to a certain extent and analyze it.

The fact that this town is being attacked by monsters, and that those monsters are a threat that they are barely able to fight against after gathering skilled mercenaries and bodyguards that were former adventurers.

Every day confirming the survival of the people that are being protected, and realizing that each day they decrease in numbers. And those guys that are doing their best out there are also reducing in numbers.

The two strong mamonos his old friend brought along with his wife, right now one is at the entrance of the Guild and the other one is

following the wife as a guard. Their strength was quite reliable.

Even though they are mamonos, when seeing them diligently do their job as guards, there are people that are even worshipping them out of gratitude.

But they don't join the offensive no matter what, and the couple were not allowed to go outside.

They were a power that was only limited to guarding.

Thanks to that they were able to send more people to attack and investigate, but even when they are being protected by strong mamonos, the refugees are accumulating a lot of stress.

Because the thought transmission is being limited, they are unable to grasp the situation and that increases the sensation of being enclosed.

No doubts this is the worst situation Rotsgard has faced since its foundation.

That's why he can tell.

The acts of Raidou and the Kuzunoha Company, if it's only by word, they 'sound' like good-willed people that are risking their lives for the town's sake, for the sake of resolving this situation.

Just by concentrating your eyes a little, those actions will look completely abnormal.

The strongest military power of the Academy was easily killed. Zara has also received information that they didn't even provide a proper fight.

And in truth, the people that were hired were even saying that the monsters are strong and the remuneration doesn't match. Just looking at the number of deaths and the town's state, Zara intended to negotiate in that aspect.

And they defeated 15 of those.

A number that can be laughed as a lie.

And yet, he couldn't laugh at it.

Half of Zara's heart couldn't believe it, but the other half felt that it was the truth.

They walked from the Academy to the Merchant Guild.

It sounds easy, but it was enough to make Zara unable to understand Kuzunoha Company.

A small company that had no value of attention, had turned into a ghastly existence inside of him.

"Fuh, that's what happens when you don't even have much information and just judge Raidou-dono by the surface. If you changed your way of view a little, there's no personage as easy to get along with as him. I was expecting you to see through something as simple as that, but that's a shame" (Rembrandt)

"I-If such a person with no understanding in the way of commerce comes saying naïve words, anyone would get angry!! It's your fault for not properly teaching him the basics at Tsige! In the first place, why is a person with such crazy power-" (Zara)

"'Not using it'?" (Rembrandt)

"Y-Yeah" (Zara)

"I don't know. You should ask him personally. Well, his atmosphere looked different. This might have been influenced by you" (Rembrandt)

"Why did he enter the trade business?" (Zara)

"I told you, if have something to ask him, ask him personally. Also, you talked about basics and whatever, but you, are you seriously saying that?" (Rembrandt)

Rembrandt looks at Zara with eyes of elation.

Zara thought that even though he is an old friend, that's a face he doesn't see a lot in Rembrandt.

"Isn't that obvious? This is the duty of someone in the same trade. Before beginning something, you have to lay the groundwork, look at the town's market price and have the ability to place the price. If your stock has some sort of specialty, consult with us beforehand. There are a lot of things to do. And yet, he probably doesn't understand a half of it. Raidou really only thinks about selling good things at a low price. His eyes are basically only looking at the customers. Just how is such a merchant going to go by in this world?" (Zara)

"Good things at the lowest price. Isn't that a basic in business? He is putting that in practice. Truly nice" (Rembrandt)

"And I'm saying that doesn't work in practical business!" (Zara)

"It does" (Rembrandt)

"… You, did you go by in this way at that town and got your head crazy?" (Zara)

"Didn't we think in this way when we began our business?" (Rembrandt)

"Yeah, but after actually doing it, you realize that that naivety doesn't work!" (Zara)

"Why?" (Rembrandt)

Rembrandt asked Zara like a child.

"… To be able to wedge into the people that have authority. Because 'wisely' doing things is more important than ideals, no, it is necessary. Capitalize people with gold, kill people with gold. If you are unable to do that… you won't be able to become bigger" (Zara)

"Right. But, that only applies to people like us" (Rembrandt)

"What are you trying to say?" (Zara)

The eyes of Zara grow clouded.

“Before the power of Tomoe-dono and Mio-dono, just how many merchants are able to properly negotiate? For example: if the current you stands in the same space as those four, just how many of their demands will you be able to change into a favorable one? With that special method of yours” (Rembrandt)

“Such a thing, I will somehow manage to” (Zara)

“Even with the risk of having your important things and this whole town scattered away? Even with the risk of not knowing what kind of retribution will come if your actions are taken as traitorous?” (Rembrandt)

“!!!”

“Of course, if he wants to, I would teach him as much as he wants about stores. I will support him. But right now I don’t think there’s a need to for him. He doesn’t think much about the adventurers that die in the wasteland, but he is a merchant that wants to help the people that have fallen ill or have curse illness. He holds the ideal of selling good medicine at a low price. I think he is actually a plenty beneficial person. He doesn’t fit in a relationship where he holds the head of someone, and a pointlessly high-pressured personality doesn’t fit him either” (Rembrandt)

Zara was probably self-aware that the latter half was pointing out at himself, Zara’s expression turns into a bitter one.

“Are you saying business can be twisted by violence? Can such a crooked act continue? The church, the country, won’t forgive such an act” (Zara)

“Really? If they think that giving them freedom is more beneficial than binding them, it isn’t that impossible right? Supreme dragons sometimes come out from their nest and destroy villages; spirits rampage and block the sea and highways. These are things that happen every now and then. But do they go suppress them every time it happens? The only thing you would be able to do is pray, to wait for that threat to pass by. Because they understand that this

way has less victims” (Rembrandt)

“It’s foolish to put those natural disasters at the same level as the Kuzunoha Company” (Zara)

“A suppression unit led by a level 920 was needed to defeat one supreme dragon. They have two people that surpass 1,500 and can be considered of possessing that same power. Don’t you think that’s not much different? Also, do you know? Just by being strong, when that strength is on a whole different dimension, it even brings growth to towns you know? That’s truly nice. Even when taking into account that my town is one that is easily influenced by that kind of effect” (Rembrandt)

Zara gulps at the words of Rembrandt.

Because the words that were coming out from his old friend that used gold and several tricks to climb higher, felt nothing but scary.

It is certainly true that if the Dragon Slayer Sofia is level 920, and the words of Rembrandt are true, Kuzunoha Company possesses power stronger than that of the strongest adventurer.

Even so, Zara is still clinging to his crumbling common sense.

“… Impossible. That’s impossible, Pat. If a single company practices such tyranny and egoism, the Goddess-sama would definitely bring divine judgment to it. Right?” (Zara)

“I wonder if even that divine judgment will be able to reach them, Zara. I… betted in the side that won’t reach. That’s why, no matter what anyone says, the Rembrandt Company will not stop supporting Kuzunoha Company. I don’t think the Goddess-sama would come out for a company, but even if that happens, I don’t have any intentions of changing my bet” (Rembrandt)

“Such arrogance is…” (Zara)

“If an ideal is able to stay practical even without changing its shape, arrogance is just fine. Lately, I have begun thinking this way. That blowing away all the people that only look at benefits and moving on is okay. At the end I was unable to do it, but if it’s Raidou, he

will be able to. But well, I think his arrogance is brought by his ignorance though. That's why I don't meddle unnecessarily and simply watch as he does things the way he wants to" (Rembrandt)

"… That might not even be business anymore you know? No, it wouldn't even be realistic" (Zara)

"Isn't that fine? If an organization surpassing the border of business appears and cleanses this world of illness and curse diseases, it wouldn't be bad to be part of such an unprecedented exploit. If he so wishes to, I will walk alongside. Zara, let me tell you this. He is not a man that would make people in his side suffer losses. In our words, he is a source of revenue that we would want to get no matter what we have to betray" (Rembrandt)

"Even if that means hyumans, no, even the Goddess herself?" (Zara)

"Yeah. What's wrong? If gold is supremacy and profit is justice, no matter what you betray it is still 'business', right?" (Rembrandt)

"But Pat, that is…" (Zara)

"… Fukkuku. I know. I already know. If that were truly the case, it would be a lie to say that we haven't profited from the war that way in these 20 years. That's because people like us with capital and connections are able to profit like crazy from it. I am in a remote town in the wasteland where fighting for your life is usual. Not in Limia nor Gritonia. Well, the current Tsige has gained enough revenue to the point that it would be able to join the war and not fall down. That is our limit. Even if I talk all high-and-mighty, I don't want to join hands and earn profits from war" (Rembrandt)

Rembrandt laughs.

Those vigorous words of his that one could catch a glimpse of slight madness, were laughed away by the person himself.

"That war… taught me that naivety won't save anything. I am grateful for that" (Zara)

"That huh. You slipped there. 'This' war has not finished yet you

know? Also, even if you say you are grateful with that face, the only thing I can get through it is hatred. Well, I am the same though. My older brother and his wife died in the war after all" (Rembrandt)

"I lost all of my relatives" (Zara)

"Right. We have desperately lived with the mindset that only gold and ourselves were the only reliable things" (Rembrandt)

"Yeah. That's why, when I see someone like Raidou, I feel my own pettiness. Also, he gives a… I still can't say for sure, but I feel like something is out of place. Not about his power or anything like that. A feeling as if he is a different race from us" (Zara)

"Out of place huh. I see. You also have your own way of thinking. Then I don't mind. But if you are going to join, it's better to make it fast. This is honest advice from a friend that has faced the same pain and walked the same path" (Rembrandt)

"You… I, still can't approve of him that much" (Zara)

"Try coming to Tsige once. When you look at the state of affairs, your way of thinking will also change. Right, let's have my daughters guide you. A big service there you know?" (Rembrandt)

The remote town that is dramatically changing. Remembering his own den, Rembrandt was unable to contain himself again and leaked out a laugh.

"Sif-chan huh. She became beautiful right" (Zara)

"Hoh~, I haven't said a single word about Sif though? I see, I see. When you heard about big service, you remembered Sif who resembles the Lisa you fell in love with a long time ago, right? Yeah yeah, how stubborn you are Zara" (Rembrandt)

"Wa?! I-I wasn't really…" (Zara)

"Nah, I won't be holding strange suspicions on a close friend like you… is what you thought I would say?! You old lecher! The eyes you use to follow Lisa are already indecent you bastard!" (Rembrandt)

“Guo, Pat, what are you saying in such a critical situation?!” (Zara)

Rembrandt strangles Zara with words that one can’t tell if he was joking or being serious.

The people that were looking at it from afar showed slight signs of fun, so they probably thought those two were playing around.

No one aside from Rembrandt himself would know if he did so purposely or not.

After about 5 minutes.

Seeing the mercenaries return one after the other to the Guild and the unchanged state of Raidou, Zara leaked out a low “Impossible”.

Rembrandt, hearing that small and feeble voice of his, opened his mouth wide and laughed.

Raidou looked at this in surprise.

Chapter 145: Lime and Mondo

(Okay, we safely finished one lap of patrolling. There might still be one hidden somewhere, but it seems the Merchant Guild will be taking the investigation regarding that. Our master Raidou should be able to continue his operation, but is there any new order from your side?)

(P-Please wait for a moment… Sorry for the wait. Then, continue by going to the northwest section and enter suppression. Please begin the investigation of the reason for the thought transmission jamming. By the time the sun goes down, return to base and report the situation and the results of your investigation)

(Received clearly. Well then)

(Yeah, the need for a regular report is unnecessary since the job doesn't require it. Wish you well)

The thought transmission finishes.

I can't talk, so I let Shiki handle the report of the situation and the instructions for the next action.

I also tapped into the conversation, so I know the contents of it. No need for Shiki to explain me.

"Next place is northwest huh. We just have to walk straight to the west. It is one of the few places where merchants sell products targeted to residents with low income and social status, right?" (Makoto)

"Yeah. The Academy most likely wants to liberate the establishments related to the Academy itself and the places where rich people are gathered in. They probably want to get as much support from the rich as possible. In the current state, it is assured that the Academy Principal's standing is plummeting. Looking at his

impatient state, I even thought that instead of having one of the people aiming at the Principal's seat, it would be fine to have Waka-sama take over. He looks only at numbers, and using the treasured corps he created, they easily got partially destroyed; making him fall into a completely shaken state. Even in the clique strifes that seem to be his specialty, he was unable to control it concurrently, so it is easy to see his limits" (Shiki)

"He doesn't want to give us any big job huh" (Makoto)

"When we finish the northwest, the next thing he will probably make us do is a joint operation with the purple coats" (Shiki)

"Even when I am temporary, I am still a teacher of the Academy, so he will use me as if he owns me. I will bring out the name of the Kuzunoha Company every now and then, but I don't have any intentions of badmouthing the Academy. In reality, the achievement of pinpointing the variant's reason of appearing will most likely be taken by the Academy Principal. Looking at how things are going" (Makoto)

"Yeah, since the demerits of having us as the ones pinpointing it would be big after all. If he were able to break the deadlock with his own abilities it would be one thing, but that's clearly the wrong way of doing things. It would be fine if he would just have a random guest of any power to see that he is asking the assistance of Waka-sama. I have heard from Tomoe-dono, it seems you were shouted at" (Shiki)

Shiki and I were smiling bitterly at the orders of the Academy Principal.

We are bringing out the name of the company occasionally, but in every place we go, I properly tell them that I am a teacher of the Academy, and I also announce that I am there under the orders of the Academy Principal.

I don't think the name of the Academy will fall just because we are the ones acting.

Because I only want them to have a good impression of the

Kuzunoha Company, and I don't intent to badmouth other places while I'm at it.

The most I am doing is making it so that the other big companies don't stand out.

We are aware that our actions exemplify the Academy's existence and we also accept it.

"Waka, we have finished collecting the ornaments that are thought to be the key" (Tomoe)

"Good work, Tomoe. Was there any problem on your side?"(Makoto)

"… No, nothing. I did act slightly to make sure the companies don't do any unnecessary things, but it was all finished in a good note" (Tomoe)

"Act slightly?" (Makoto)

"I gave water, food and blankets to the Merchant Guild representative, the one called Zara. I told him to use them well" (Tomoe)

"Will that serve as a diversion of some sort? Or more like, that food, did it come from Asora?" (Makoto)

"Instead of having a company from who-knows-where, it would be better for the Merchant Guild to bring those articles out using their own name, since that will cause less troubles. It will be beneficial for them as well and I "requested" him to mention our name a bit. The food, water, and blankets, were all things that I randomly bought from slightly faraway towns in the few days I travelled. Even if we have a lot of food, I won't be giving out the food of Asora. I did mix some fruits though. The fruits are proof enough that we are the ones providing things" (Tomoe)

"You even bought things. Sorry" (Makoto)

"Don't worry. I just had the scattered Forest Onis buy those. It would be troublesome if this were detected as the self-

advertisement of a company after all. This is to make it so that our company is the one that stands out the most" (Tomoe)

"Tell me how much it cost later okay? But, I am surprised that that representative accepted that kind of condition" (Makoto)

"'Don't inquire, bring out the name of a company' Just with that, he was able to obtain great quantities of food, water, and covers they were lacking for their beddings. Even if the person is not a merchant, the decision would be clear. He may be the Merchant Guild representative, but he is no doubt a hyuman" (Tomoe)

With her characteristic smile, Tomoe laughed with a 'Fufu'.

I wonder if it's really such a simple thing.

Representative Zara gave me the impression that he is the type that will put a condition of his own in any proposal that he is given.

No matter how weakened he is. No, maybe Rembrandt-san helped out.

In that case, maybe after receiving the words of his old friend, he accepted the conditions of Tomoe.

"… Waka, it wasn't such a complicated thing you know?" (Tomoe)

"… You, are you an esper?" (Makoto)

"Your expression was showing several words. Fufu, at his back there are people he has to shelter no matter what, and without enough food, and in this situation where it is not clear when it will be resolved; even if the situation has improved, if we were to offer to pull him, what would happen? Unable to use thought transmission, he can't even decide things properly. Now then, in front of him there's starving people, big amounts of food, and blankets for the people that are only wearing the same clothes they happened to be wearing since the events began. No matter if we give it, or we don't, the 'negotiation' is just an easy deal" (Tomoe)

"I see. Is that how it is. Wait, you, did you just say the food in front of him? Don't tell me, you used teleportation in front of

representative Zara?!” (Makoto)

Isn’t that bad?

Because you know, we already said random things like usage limits and burdens.

“In the first place, you already told him that we use teleportation right?” (Tomoe)

“But that was before we created a lot of settings for it, you know?!” (Makoto)

“No problem. Because those things are provided by the Kuzunoha Company and given by the Merchant Guild. We asked him and he had no choice but to cooperate for the sake of the residents. Even if he wails about the origins of the objects that were teleported, the Merchant Guild will still take part in it. The ones that were piling up the food in this place were the Lizardmen. He knows the Mist Lizards are still here, so the representative-dono heartily accepted to cooperate. In the end it was only a verbal promise, but if he is able to shake his head and go against us in the future… I can only say that he would have quite the guts” (Tomoe)

“B-But you know…” (Makoto)

I can’t help but feel if it’s really okay to do something so reckless.

“Also, Waka, hiding secrets is truly a hard thing to do for the people that hold the secret and for the people that have to hide it” (Tomoe)

“Y-Yeah…” (Makoto)

Isn’t it obvious for the people that hold secrets to hide them?

“Actually, it is a lot easier to have someone hide it for you” (Tomoe)

“…”

I don’t understand.

“Root probably does something similar when playing diplomacy. But what’s essential is to make the other person believe that he can’t let others know of that secret” (Tomoe)

“… And?” (Makoto)

“Saying it in an extreme way, have someone with a certain position know something other people don’t know, but if he acts in a way so that other people don’t learn about it, it is the same as if no one knows” (Tomoe)

Hmm, even if you tell me that knowing is the same as not knowing, I just can’t grasp it.

“Are you saying that, instead of us hiding it, it would be better to make it a public secret?” (Makoto)

“It is slightly different, but in a broader sense, that’s how it is. Root made some good groundwork for our teleportation and he would make the continuation” (Tomoe)

Then aren’t I right?

I will do my best in understanding a percent of the story they might come up with.

“… Understood. Then, for now let’s continue the subjugation. If I remember correctly, at that side there’s Lime and Mondo, right?” (Makoto)

“Yes. There might not be any left for me. I wanted to unsheathe my katana since it has been a while, but it seems like it would be better to just wait for another opportunity. I am jealous of Mio and Shiki… N? For some reason Mio is looking strangely happy. Did something happen?” (Tomoe)

Tomoe shows sadness at the fact that she can’t unsheathe her sword.

At the place she was gazing at, she saw that Mio who’s in a jolly mood. Tomoe makes a wondering expression and voices out her question.

“Ah, that. I had Shiki and Mio do a competition of sorts. About which of them would be able to clean up more variants” (Makoto)

“Hoh? Looking at her state, it must have been Mio’s win” (Tomoe)

“Yeah. 4-2, Mio’s win. I made it so they can’t interfere with each other, but it was a pretty good competition” (Makoto)

“I see… Even so, she is so happy I feel like she would fly at any moment. I can’t comprehend why” (Tomoe)

“Hm? Maybe because I told them I would grant one wish to the winner” (Makoto)

“?!!!!”

Instantly, the face of Tomoe turns dreadful.

Ah, I feel like it would have been better to just wash away that question.

“W-What’s wrong Tomoe?” (Makoto)

“Waka, what’s up with that luxurious reward?! I didn’t hear anything about this!!” (Tomoe)

“No well, you were at the Guild after all. Well then…” (Makoto)

Work work.

We have to depart soon.

“Wait, Waka! The talk is not over yet! No, it has actually begun just now! Where are you heading to?!” (Tomoe)

“The northwest section. That talk, I will tell it to you while we are moving. Don’t lift your voice so much!” (Makoto)

“I request an acceptable explanation. Even if I accept it, I might not accept it though! In other words, I also get a wish okay?! Waka?!” (Tomoe)

It has turned quite crazy.

Oh well, it is better than being all tense.

Lime and Mondo are at the northwest section, so it shouldn't be that bad there.

I should just go with a pace where I can return to the Academy by the time the sun goes down.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

"Hey, there it goes, Mondo"

"Understood!"

At both sides of the street that has no stone pavings, showing the whole naked ground, there's a thin man that's blowing away a gray monster while raising a shout, and at the direction it is headed to, there's a darkish skinned male approaching.

The big one-eyed monster with a large ball-shaped body was bigger than both men, but the man called Mondo grabbed it with one hand and killed its momentum.

The instant Mondo seized the monster, he smashed it to the ground, and after a pale light, its shape changed…

Into a single tree.

Mondo is a Forest Oni, considered as one of the ancestors of the Elfs.

He activated his special ability [Tree Punishment].

A technique that turns the target into a tree.

A dreadful skill that had scared even the master of Asora, Makoto, in the past.

The variant that turned into a bright green tree can't oppose at all. It decided the battle in an instant.

"The reforestation work is moving along well" (Lime)

“With this, it makes 8 huh. There’s still quite a few left. It feels like… our pace is not increasing” (Mondo)

“We are doing it in a careful way in order to avoid attention, so it can’t be helped. I had a call from Tomoe-neesan just now. Seems the Boss and everyone else are heading here” (Lime)

“I see… it seems my incompetent disciples are causing him problems, so it will pain me to meet them” (Mondo)

“The Akua-Eris Combi huh. Then, if they are taken into account as a combi, the responsibility would be divided, and that wouldn’t be good for Akua. Boss says all kinds of things, but he is not actually that worried. As proof, he let all the Forest Onis migrate to Asora, right? He doesn’t mind it much. He is actually enjoying himself” (Lime)

“Lime, having you tell me that, it really relieves me. I at least want to show him results that can satisfy him. Please accompany for a bit more” (Mondo)

“Of course. I can do great bouts with you. You are the perfect rival to climb the rankings of Asora. I will cooperate with you in whatever you want” (Lime)

“Yeah, for a brief period of time, we had a superior battle formation and great order, but with the participation of the Gorgons and Winged-kin, it instantly spiked down. We have to train once again” (Mondo)

“It seems there’s limitations in the stone-turning ability and the flying ability. Those are close to cheating. Even if those abilities don’t have use limitations like your [Tree Punishment], there’s still certain rules to them. If the rules change, it will probably return to a position close to before. Well, that’s just an estimation though” (Lime)

“Really” (Mondo)

Lime and Mondo had finished evacuating the residents in the area a long time ago and have also finished the evacuation of the

merchants.

At the second day, they stopped a part of the variants that appeared in the evacuation points and finished gathering the necklaces in a fast pace.

The motivation of Mondo who has returned from Asora, and the skillfulness of Lime blended perfectly together.

And then, at the third day.

Receiving a transmission to change into offensive, they didn't make any flashy actions, but have begun their movements to suppress the variants and establish stability in the evacuation points.

In this section there's no other power.

There´s 3 evacuation points, and with Lime's personal connections and the sure-kill technique [Tree Punishment] of Mondo, they were able to splendidly protect the points.

Their communication is done in secrecy and the goods are being supplied with the use of teleportation. It can be said that they are doing a good job.

The locations of the evacuation points are somewhat close to each other, so it is more convenient when protecting a big amount of people.

Moreover, compared to the evacuation points of other sections, the ones there were spacious and the density of residents is low.

Quickly selecting the evacuation points that were easy to protect was a good move from those two.

Taking into account the saved people and the people that were able to safely escape, the northwest section is comfortable and it created low amounts of stress.

At the opposite site there's the northeast section where the Merchant Guild is located in, and because of the residents seeking refuge there, the density at that place is high and the stress must be

quite high too. It is also the reason why representative Zara is being driven into a corner.

Because the two have saved them, the merchants and the residents that have moderate earnings are relying quite a lot in the two. Depending on the point-of-view, one can even call it dependence.

The name of Kuzunoha Company is resonating in their hearts a lot more than Makoto thinks.

“But what is the objective of the one that released these things here? That person knew Waka-sama was here in this town, and still did this. It would only be enough to cause an uproar. The thought transmission jamming and the appearance of variants; the person that can think of this kind of things should be able to understand a simple fact like that” (Mondo)

“Who knows. I don’t understand the thinking of the demon race. Well, I will just move as the arms and legs of Boss and the others, that’s all I need to think about. They will tell us if necessary. Also, those personages definitely won’t do anything that might endanger us or Asora. Rather, they have even stopped us from doing dangerous things when trying to be of help. Even in this occasion, when the Lizards were added as members, they trembled in joy” (Lime)

“… Yeah, I understand that. Because I felt the same way as those Mist Lizards. Lime, it would be nice if the time you can tell your wish to Waka-sama comes near” (Mondo)

“That depends on Tomoe-neesan. It’s that kind of promise after all. Well, I will just wait patiently. I have received the time to do so. No need to hurry” (Lime)

Lime looks at the distance.

“Then, how about we clean up one or two more, partner? Let’s make our brethren at Asora envious of us” (Mondo)

“Yeah!” (Lime)

The two enlarge their perception range, looking for variants and

choosing the ones they can safely hunt without catching the attention of the evacuation points.

And then, by the time Makoto and the others arrived, the two had turned several variants more into trees, and went to welcome their arrival.

Chapter 146: Eris, full-throttle

—Student dormitory.

Normally it is literally as the name states, the place where students live and the place where they can relax at, however, because of the turmoil caused by the variants, the student dormitory has turned into an evacuation point.

The territory that has now lost Mio and Shiki – the two reliable guards -, has obviously increased in uneasiness.

Jin and the others, who had just woken up, had taken this job as their replacement, but as expected, they are unable to bring enough comfort to disperse all the uneasiness.

Even the people that had witnessed their fight with the variant Ilumgand, it would still be hard to suddenly trust in their skills just with that one fight.

If Mio and Shiki hadn't collected the accessories that served as the key of variant transformation, variants would have most likely appeared already.

"What's wrong Eris?"

"Akua, this is bad. The Academy Principal is going mad" (Eris)

"What does that mean? There's nothing particularly strange going on inside the dormitory" (Akua)

"It seems he is trying to utilize those kids. He got wind about them waking up… probably" (Eris)

"Hey, it is not like you are Waka-sama…so where is that random intuition coming from?" (Akua)

"It is difficult to explain. It is like… a spiritual kind of thing? At any

rate, I can feel the Academy Principal approaching" (Eris)

"Hah…" (Akua)

"Well then, what should we do? If the students are brought out, we would have to leave here as well. If that happens, there won't be anyone here left" (Eris)

"But Waka's orders were to protect those seven right? I think he considers the other students as extras" (Akua)

"Fufufufu, and so, I have a good idea" (Eris)

Maybe she felt something, Eris, who was sitting hugging her knees at the dormitory's roof, suddenly lifted her head up.

Her partner Akua wondered if something happened and asked her the details, but after hearing that it was the intuition of Eris, she lowered her tension slightly.

Just in case, she talked in a hypothetical way supposing that intuition is correct, but Eris looked at Akua and made an ominous smile and said that she had an idea.

"… Let's hear it out for the time being" (Akua)

"We "protect" the whole dormitory with our combination magic" (Eris)

"C-Combination magic?! Could it be, you are telling me to do that?! I-I don't want to. I don't want to, okay?!" (Akua)

The taller build Akua stands up and rejects the proposal of Eris.

Her expression even showed fear.

She must have quite a bad memory of it.

"But with that we would be able to resolve everything harmoniously. I investigated just now and the dormitory has quite the amount of food left. There might be some slight fighting over it, but they won't seriously go at it. It isn't that big of a deal even if

they can't go outside for a while" (Eris)

"I am totally against it!" (Akua)

Akua turns her back at Eris and sits down.

"… I feel like Waka-sama will definitely get angry" (Eris)

"Like hell that would happen! I don't want to taste that shame again" (Akua)

'Buh~ there isn't that much time left you know. Can't be helped then, I will do it alone" (Eris)

"?!! Wait. Is that something that can be done alone?" (Akua)

"Of course there's also a solo version. But my magic power isn't enough so lend it to me okay?" (Eris)

"Oooh! Iazly?!" (Akua)

"Yeah, because if I don't say so, I thought Akua wouldn't do it with me. Now, magic power, magic power" (Eris)

With a trembling finger Akua points at Eris and makes a strange scream, but Eris seems to have understood its meaning.

She has been Akua's partner since a long time ago after all.

"You better remember this later…" (Akua)

Akua looks at Eris with eyes filled with resentment, but it seems she intents to cooperate with what Eris is trying to do, she agreed with Eris and acts in order to give magic power to her.

It is a rare deed that can't be done unless the magic power compatibility of both parties is high.

Akua and Eris may be a rough combi of different statures, but have been together since long so they are able to do it.

"You fell for it, Akua" (Eris)

“?!!! My body is!!” (Akua)

“Fufufu, well then… Let’s do it” (Eris)

“N-No! Eris, since when did you learn such a stupid technique?!” (Akua)

The magic power mixes and in the moment it was about to flow from Akua to Eris… Akua’s body trembled and suddenly stood up.

It was clear that it wasn’t her will.

“Now, your hand… let’s hold it~” (Eris)

“Don’t mess around! Eris, Eri~s!” (Akua)

Ignoring the shouts of Akua, the two spin around as if dancing.

“Sparkle, diamond of the heart~” (Eris)

“Body, move! If you don’t move now, when are you going to move! Move move move—!!!” (Akua)

“Special technique, Kokyt– Hah?! I-Is it running wild?!” (Eris)

The hand that was linked with Eris was shaken off forcefully, the hands that were linked as if forming a shell, were separated.

Akua’s head faced slightly downward, and with an angered expression, she glares at Eris.

“… Eris, are you prepared?” (Akua)

“No well, once you try it out it will feel good. No wait, that’s not it. It is true that there’s no time. It is definitely better to have the spell done. Calm down” (Eris)

“Who do you think you are making angry?!” (Akua)

“At any rate, I understand. This time for sure I will do it by myself. This is for the sake of Waka-sama~ Akua~” (Eris)

“Wuuuu~” (Akua)

Akua's thoughts had calmed down a bit, but this tells Akua that Eris' intuition was correct.

Because she learned that the Academy Principal is really heading to the Student Dormitory personally.

Her growling still continued, but she stopped herself from attacking Eris.

"Hah… The solo version is lonely" (Eris)

"SHUT.UP!" (Akua)

"Let's do it again with renewed spirits!" (Eris)

"Seriously, okay?" (Akua)

At the edge where Eris went to, she lifted both hands to the sky, and after that, she linked them both as if forming a shell.

"The greatest technique of the Shiratori's, from my mentor-Aghbuu!" (Eris)

Even though she was in the middle of a speech, a punch was nailed at Eris' abdomen.

"Just go to sleep already, you stupid girl! The aria has already finished, so something like this, even I can do it!" (Akua)

"Mugugugu" (Eris)

"I can do it! Koky-, nevermind, [Floral Ice Prison]!" (Akua)

"Muguu!!" (Eris)

Strange magic power expands at once on the roof of the Student dormitory and converts into water element.

Three patterns of different designs appear over the head of Akua and Eris vertically.

The emerald green light coming out from Akua's right hand passes through each one of them.

After a while of ascending, it stood still for a moment, and then, as if marking that as its summit, it released several bundles of light.

The bundles of light pierce the ground and fill its surrounding with ice. The student dormitory had been enclosed in an ice cage.

It only took a short time.

A spell that is quite large in scale and strong.

From the spells Akua and Eris can use, this one is pretty high up.

It is actually not a spell that should be used on ‘mere’ variants.

It is a selection stemming from Eris’ playful personality, and Akua who is the one acting as the main spellcaster of it, her fatigue is totally not deserved.

Her fatigued look is not a pose, she is really exhausted.

“To attack me while I was doing the presentation. Don’t you have compassion nor the sense of beauty, Akua?!!” (Eris)

“Waka-sama told me to do that when you are running off your mouth and doing weird things!!” (Akua)

With a tired face, Akua refutes the energetic Eris.

“In the first place, this spell doesn’t have such a stuffy name! Listen well, it is [Aurora]” (Eris)

“Shut up. Seriously, just shut up Eris. Also, that names feels wrong somehow” (Akua)

“Don’t mind it. There are many techniques that change name when it is Solo version. Anyways! You have to say Kokytos and then, stopping once, you raise your voice and say Floral Ice Prison!” (Eris)

“… Waka-sama, it is already reaching the point where only me isn’t enough to stop her anymore…” (Akua)

“In the first place, if we are going for the literal translation, it should be Floral Cold Water Prison. Akua is really half-baked and near-sighted” (Eris)

“Yes yes” (Akua)

In the first place, the characters that Makoto uses are only on the level of interesting for Akua.

Eris is just unnaturally knowledgeable about them, that’s all.

She is at the level that if she were to go to Lorel, she would be highly praised by the people with knowledge about the Wise language.

Maybe she learned things from other places, she uses words Akua has never heard before to do comedic dialogues with Makoto.

Since a while back, before even meeting Makoto and Tomoe; Eris, has been thick in the strange component.

In any case, may it be kanji or in cross-wise writing, leaving aside if it was embarrassing or not for Akua, she still tried her best.

“Hey”

“Yes yes”

“… How are we going to leave?” (Eris)

“… Oh” (Akua)

A proper retort from Eris.

The Forest Onis Akua and Eris, are confined at the Student Dormitory with Jin and the others.

It has been settled that Mondo will be praying to the heavens.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

Mondo, seeing that spectacle from faraway, dashes in front of me and makes a jumping dogeza.

E-Eh? Was that something the combi did?

I understood the reason he lowered his head.

But I also clearly understand that it wasn't his fault.

After finishing the clean-up at the northwest section completely, we transmitted with thought transmission that we intended to return to the academy.

At that moment, something strange happened at the Student Dormitory.

It was suddenly covered in ice and unable to lay a finger on it.

We don't understand the situation inside, so currently we have no troops that can move and can't tell them to return and investigate that place.

Mondo originally wasn't going to accompany us, but the moment he heard about this, he told us he wanted to go along with us.

There's already no variants, so as long as we hold back the influx of variants from other sections, Lime alone is enough.

His opinion was the same, so I decided that it was okay and accepted Mondo accompanying us.

I see.

So he had a presentiment huh.

I also remember that ice pyramid.

I tried connecting with Jin through thought transmission, but as expected, it was cut off.

Akua and Eris as well.

From what I heard of Eris in the past, this is supposed to be a barrier of complete isolation.

And in truth, it is scary tough. To destroy it with physical attacks or

magic attacks, you would need quite a lot of effort.

Even against Tomoe and Mio it will last for a while, so it is quite the technique.

Well, by the next day I noticed it wasn't perfect though.

It has an incredible weak point.

Well I couldn't find the heart to point out that weak point in consideration of Akua, since they went through so much trouble as to wear embarrassing frilly clothes, deceived by Eris with that pointless dance, and even making a speech about the special technique.

What was it? Kokytus, maybe?

The rough Forest Oni combi showed me that barrier magic, one with a bright red face and the other all energetically.

It is definitely more embarrassing for the taller one to match the shorter one by bending her knees… but well, leaving that aside.

"Mondo, this is not really your fault. Akua and Eris must have had some sort of circumstance to do so. I will investigate just in case, since it seems something has happened, but now that I think about it, it is convenient to have the students inside that thing. Shiki, they have food right?" (Makoto)

"Yes. If it's for a few days, there won't be any problems. I don't know if they will exhaust it thoughtlessly, but well, even if they don't eat for one or two days, they won't die" (Shiki)

"Well there's someone here that could fight against a dragon after going three days without eating and only taking a simple meal after" (Tomoe)

"Tomoe, don't remind me. That's how it is, Mondo. You don't have to mind it much. Now, get up get up" (Makoto)

"Waka-sama… I am truly sorry! I will give those idiots a harsh punishment later" (Mondo)

“I will leave that to you. Anyways, we have to return to the Academy. In any case, we can’t converse with them right now, so what are you going to do Mondo? Return to where Lime is? We will do something about that thing over there” (Makoto)

“But then!” (Mondo)

“We have yet to decide if we will destroy it or keep it like that after all. That thing, is pretty conspicuous you see. Maybe Root is also unexpectedly holding his head in pain right now” (Makoto)

“Kuku, you have a point. He might also be unexpectedly surprised by it. Mondo, if that’s true, I will give a reward to the Forest Onis later. The punishment will be as Waka stated, your own decision, but the reward is fine to give it to everyone. Well, it is not settled yet though” (Tomoe)

Tomoe talks with the apologetic Mondo as if she is having fun.

After Mondo got his camp and passed several mock battles with Tomoe, Mio, Shiki and I; his way of acting towards us gradually changed a lot.

In the Forest Onis, Akua can also be considered as one of the people that has changed nicely, but Mondo changed quite a lot.

The stubborn him made a dramatic change as if a hoodlum had transformed into a ninja.

It seems he had quite the confidence in his power [Tree Punishment], and when that power was completely crushed, he must have faced some sort of change inside of him.

But well, only the person himself knows the whole truth. I am just speculating here.

“Thank you very much for your benevolent words, Tomoe-sama” (Mondo)

“Umu. Go ahead and return to where Lime is. Leave this to us. You guys should rest for tomorrow” (Tomoe)

“Then, excuse me” (Mondo)

“Yeah, have a good rest” (Makoto)

Mondo salutes once and goes back.

Lime and Mondo aren’t the members that have to return to Asora today to report, so this is the last time we will see him today.

In the midst of dusk, we look at the icy work of art that’s shining in the setting sun while walking once again.

“What are going to do with that thing? Destroy it? Leave it?” (Makoto)

“Isn’t it fine to just leave it as it is? It is pointlessly sturdy and troublesome-desu” (Mio)

“I hold the same opinion. Depending on the situation of the Academy, they might even recruit the students to fight” (Shiki)

“I also think the same. ‘It isn’t something that can be destroyed in one or two days’, is how we should leave it as” (Tomoe)

Mio, Shiki, and finally Tomoe, seem to be against the destruction of that work of art.

If it was to protect the students, they would have used it as soon as we left the student dormitory, so some sort of circumstances must have occurred to make them utilize it.

Let’s just confirm that part and then leave it as it is then.

Those two can manage things inside after all.

“Only ask for the circumstances to those two and leave it at that then” (Makoto)

“I think that’s fine. Tomorrow we will move onto liberating the remaining sectors and continue carrying out our functions. We still don’t know clearly which country will be the first one arriving, but we will give a baton pass to them and that will mark our job as

finished” (Tomoe)

“What about cooperating with the reconstruction?” (Makoto)

“I think that it should be fine to just leave it to the Forest Onis, Eldwas, and Lime’s group who are already here. What’s next would be how Root will close things. What I predict is that he will have the countries glare at each other and bring out the achievements” (Tomoe)

“Then the call of the Merchant Guild would be the most pressing problem huh” (Makoto)

“… Well, I wonder about that. Rembrandt doesn’t seem like he intends to do much moving, but that guy called Zara might be unexpectedly easy to deal with you know?” (Tomoe)

“Zara-san huh. Right now that person is weakened, but he is actually a really formidable person. I don’t think he is an easy guy like you think though” (Makoto)

“He is facing this kind of crisis after all. If he were to clearly learn ‘from somewhere’ that this was done by the demon race, one of the thoughts he might have is to somehow secure the use of the Kuzunoha’s teleport transportation for emergencies. I don’t know who leaked it, but he seemed to already know about Mio and my level, so I wonder, how is that man going to move?” (Tomoe)

Tomoe seemed to be having fun from the bottom of her heart as she seemed to remember something while laughing.

So she is saying that he would use us as a supplier in moments of emergencies?

It is true that representative Zara said he had gold but had nothing to use it on.

Maybe it is because I am just not good with him, I end up thinking he is not that kind of easy individual, but Tomoe seems to have a different thought.

“… If he still intends to place pressure even after this situation, it

would be better to just cut off his head now, Waka-sama” (Mio)

“Mio, that’s just…” (Makoto)

“A person that takes the outstretched hand, and yet, holds a knife with the other hand, is just not worth giving them compassion. Good with good, evil with evil-desu wa” (Mio)

That’s one way of thinking about it though.

“With this, this town will realize the reality that this place is also at war with the demon race.The Academy, the merchant guild; they won’t be able to stay as they were before. I think this is a desirable change for us, Waka-sama” (Shiki)

Shiki.

With all that’s happened, it is certainly true that this will most likely make them aware.

N?

In that case…

“We find a suitable moment to expose that this was the deed of the demon race?” (Makoto)

“No. The Academy should be able to reach that conclusion on their own. I modified the collected ornaments a bit, so that will serve as evidence” (Shiki)

“So you made it easier to know. No matter how incompetent the ones investigating are, they will probably realize in 2 days and report it” (Mio)

Mio and Shiki answer my words with a smirk.

That must mean the modification is effective.

But in that case…

“If they learn that this is the work of the demon race, won´t it be

bad for us? Kuzunoha Company is being suspected of having connections with the demon race, is what the representative said" (Makoto)

I do know Rona-san in person, so it is not really a lie.

"Waka, I wonder how much of those inconsiderate words will the residents believe in. Isn't that an accusation without proof to begin with? I think that malicious gossip is as good as gone already. If they spread such a thing thoughtlessly, it will only make the surrounding residents see them with bad eyes. After all, we risked our bodies to help evacuate the residents and became the strength of the Academy to subjugate the variants. We are heroes" (Tomoe)

"I… see" (Makoto)

No well, thinking that they will become so intimate is one thing, but will it really make all the gossip disappear?

"If there's a company that still wants to do something after all this, there's also the option of letting it spread in town. It might be interesting to watch, kukuku" (Tomoe)

What an ominous laugh.

The evil magistrate Tomoe, or maybe the wholesaler Tomoe has come out?

I can tell that she is thinking about a lot of things.

How to say it, she looks quite lively.

When counted on, these three are truly reliable.

Oh.

The Academy.

We already cleaned up half of the variants today.

Tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, I wonder what kind of existence will Kuzunoha Company and I be viewed as in this town.

I don’t think it will take long to learn about the result.

Chapter 147: Last night's fireworks

The Academy had turned into a slight commotion.

The reason is of course, the sudden appearance of an icy work of art.

Tomoe said she was going to look at Root's state, so I had Mio and Shiki go as well and had them buy some time.

If we carefreely reunite in the midst of the commotion, I think that's good enough.

To ask the reason of why Akua and Eris used the spell, I infiltrated into the Student Dormitory.

I can tell that the students are panicking.

But well, it is a spell that doesn't harm anyone inside.

Even when meeting them it would be bothersome, but I used thought transmission to contact Eris, confirmed their current location, and went to meet them as soon as I knew.

"And, why did you go to such lengths to use this spell to isolate the place?' (Makoto)

"Waka, that's cheating…" (Eris)

Even though I first went through the trouble of congratulating them for their hard work, there's one girl that seems to be done for. Eris had her knees curled up sitting down and rubbing the roof with her index finger.

She didn't show any signs of answering my question and was looking at me bitterly.

“W-Waka-sama, I have thought about this before but, how in the world did you enter here?” (Akua)

With a deeply exhausted expression, Akua showed even more mental fatigue and surprise.

In contrast to Eris, Akua had a beautiful upright posture as if a ruler was placed at her back.

After going through the camp training, her personality had turned quite diligent, and it may be hard for her to make follow-ups for Eris.

Maybe I should have one more person accompanying them to make it a group of three.

If that person has to group up with these two, it might be pretty hard to select the appropriate person.

The standplay of this combi is pretty intense, so even when they are among Forest Onis, these two stand out.

How troubling.

“The way I entered? In that case, Eris probably already noticed. There’s still some time till she recovers, so can I ask something Akua?” (Makoto)

“Y-Yes, what is it?” (Akua)

“If you used this in the Student Dormitory, why are you both inside?” (Makoto)

“Uh” (Akua)

With a pained expression, Akua moans and stays silent.

It wasn’t purposely, but an accident then?

With Eris here, that’s actually possible.

“Eris huh” (Makoto)

“N-No! I didn’t think about what would happen and…” (Akua)

“So you plunged into the craziness of Eris” (Makoto)

“Aw… yes. Something like that” (Akua)

“Fortunately, aside from the fact that you can’t leave, there’s no other problems. Well, good work. And so, is there anything you need to report?” (Makoto)

That’s right. There’s not much harm from inside.

But this spell is a defensive barrier, and yet, it has a dangerous sounding name like Kokytus.

If I remember correctly, it is the name of the ice hell.

I don’t know if Eris knew about it when naming it, but for a simple babysitting barrier, it is way too unfit.

It is easy to understand the reason for the name when you try to carelessly get close from outside.

Well, the Academy is leading in the research of magic, so there shouldn’t be an idiot who would do something like that but… you would get frozen.

No, I wonder if that can be considered ‘frozen’.

It is more like, a sherbet maybe?

A highland orc that got close to it instantly had half of his arm frozen white.

In an instantaneous response, he severed his own arm with the other, so he got away with only that, but the fallen arm dispersed like diamond dust and crumbled.

A frightening spell.

“No, there’s nothing really worth reporting” (Akua)

“Yeah, there is” (Eris)

“?!”

Eris suddenly joined the conversation.

So she recovered already huh.

“Eris…” (Akua)

“Fuh, they say that failure is the mother of success. Next time I will try even harder” (Eris)

“Right. So, Eris, you said you had something to report” (Makoto)

If I retort to everything, the conversation won’t progress, so, when I am hurry, I decide to not retort.

With a slightly discontent expression, Eris nods.

“The ones that might be the ringleaders are probably gathering at a luxurious house” (Eris)

“… Heh～” (Makoto)

“The movements of the variants become organized at times, so it picked my curiosity and I laid out a net” (Eris)

“… Eris, I haven’t heard about any of this though?” (Akua)

“Akua was doing my part of the work while I was doing that. Thanks” (Eris)

“Ugu” (Akua)

“Continue” (Makoto)

“Yes. They are probably using some sort of tool that – even when imperfect – it controls the variants. Something like that.” (Eris)

“Control…” (Makoto)

“Looks like the variants are gathering. The rich are in trouble” (Eris)

Eris says: “Over there” and points at the place where a lot of wealthy live at.

It is the section that the Academy is putting most of its forces in.

Tomoe for some reason didn’t put much of our forces at that place.

I think that it would be faster to gather support by having the people living there like us, but I wonder.

It would be better to hear it in detail from the person herself huh.

Commanding the variants is new information.

I should confirm that as well.

But Eris’ information gathering is quite high.

On top of that, I feel like she is getting even better at it.

“Thanks Eris. That helped a lot” (Makoto)

“Those words are wasted on me. This spell as well, it isn’t even a pain to use it as an emergency measure in order to protect Waka’s precious students from falling in the hands of the Academy Principal. And that’s how it is. I want you to please forgive Akua’s spontaneous discharge of the barrier” (Eris)

… As soon as I say thanks, she comes out with this.

Eris is truly a mystery.

“It’s not like I am angry about it. If you want to, I can even bring you out of here. I will lead the way” (Makoto)

“R-Right now it’s fine. I am worried about the students, so I think I will stay here until it melts” (Eris)

Because outside there’s Mondo huh.

But if they go outside, Tomoe will probably be giving out rewards for the Forest Onis, so there is also a good part.

… Well, okay.

I am also slightly tired, so if Eris says she wants to stay here, I will just let her.

“I see. Then that’s fine. Well, I will be returning outside” (Makoto)

“Thanks for your hard work, Waka. If possible, please give my regards to Shishou” (Eris)

“I refuse” (Makoto)

“S-So cruel” (Eris)

I leave Akua and Eris, and leave the barrier.

Reunite with Tomoe and the others, meet with the Academy Principal, and after that… what should I do?

“Raidou-dono, are you returning now?”

N?

In a place slightly far from the barrier, I was called from the courtyard of a shelter.

Oh, an unexpected person.

[Sairitz-sama. This may be my imagination, but you look a bit tired. Are you okay?]

“… How embarrassing. Even though you should be several times more tired than me” (Sairitz)

[The Academy Principal and us are doing our best to resolve the issue. Please endure for a bit longer]

“Of course. So shameful. For me to be so tense just because communication has been severed” (Sairitz)

[I think that’s a natural mood]

I am dealing with this without problems, I think.

And yet, the eyes of Sairitz-san suddenly turn sharp.

Eyes that feel as if they could see through. An unpleasant sensation.

“Raidou-dono, no, Raidou-sama, I understand that this incident is being led to resolution by another power that is not the Academy. There’s someone pulling its hand from the shadows. Even I can tell something like that, and most likely, Princess Lily has noticed this as well. The Limia King also doesn’t have eyes for decoration. The exceptions are the eyes of Aion. And it seems Rembrandt Company has already given up on taking you in” (Sairitz)

As expected, the high-ups can see that we are moving from the shadows huh.

Should I ask her to please not interfere?

But if I handle this poorly, I feel like it will increase the problems.

“The power of Kuzunoha Company – even if it’s only a part of it – I have understood it. Even if Raidou-sama is a Wise-sama, I can’t imagine how you were able to gather so many strong people and created an organization. Could it be that you have awakened what you personages sometimes possess, the superhuman mental processing, or it could be that you have that rare business ability and charisma?” (Sairitz)

[You are overestimating me. I am not a Wise-sama, and I have no other way but to call this as a position I have been blessed to be born in]

“… Right now, you are clearly not intending to use it. After this, by the suggestion of the Guild Master Falz-dono, a meeting will be made to discuss several things about the Kuzunoha Company, but Lorel Union is thinking about positively accepting Raidou-sama, Kuzunoha Company” (Sairitz)

[Thank you very much]

Oh, what a welcoming proposal.

It would be great if that was all she had to say, but her eyes are still

scary, so I can tell that it isn't over yet.

"Raidou-sama, please listen to this and consider it the will of Limia, Gritonia and Lorel" (Sairitz)

Sairitz-san draws one step closer, and mentions the names of the major powers.

I-It sounds like a threat.

"The role that the Kuzunoha Company is shouldering to resolve this incident is incredibly big. And I do think that it is not proper to ask this of you considering that" (Sairitz)

[Please continue]

"I want to ask you to fix the thought transmission urgently. If you are able to do it, I will reward you. Of course, I won't bring out the name of Kuzunoha Company regarding this matter" (Sairitz)

The restoration of the thought transmission huh.

I see.

If I tried to, I would be able to, but it would be bad if I don't confirm with Tomoe. Cause it might disrupt her plans.

'If I am able to, I will try to', should be the safe option.

[I can't promise, but I will do my best to recover it]

"I see. It's fine, thanks Raidou-sama. I will let them know of what you have said. I am sorry to have kept you for so long" (Sairitz)

Sairitz-san lowers her head deeply.

Following lead, I also lower my head.

She returned to the place where her escorts were waiting at the far distance.

So she kept the place secluded when meeting me.

Fumu, if I restore the thought transmission, we would be able to know the location of the reinforcements of every country.

That would be convenient, and if the communication is restored, the people taking shelter will suffer less stress.

I want to do it, but let's try talking with Tomoe about this.

A conversation that was tiring in a different meaning compared to when talking with Eris.

Eat, do archery, get tired, drop down, sleep, and repeat; that is my ideal, but in this world, it just doesn't work that way.

With loans, debts, and all the troublesome haggling that is probably happening here and there, it just makes my head hurt.

Yareyare.

I am truly glad that I have Tomoe and Shiki.

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＜Warning: Conversation ahead is slightly difficult to follow because of fragmented information＞

"That's an outrageous barrier. Those demi-human girls did this huh. I honestly don't want to fight you guys"

"Well well, to surprise even Myriad Color-dono, how truly pleasant-ja na. Fufufu" (Tomoe)

"This is my first time seeing such a firm and aggressive barrier. If it's through force, one day. If I am to analyze it, I want at least 3 days. Seriously, when I am close to him, I don't get bored" (Root)

"What, you intend to break it?" (Tomoe)

"By no means. I am just interested. But if it doesn't last for several days, I won't be able to analyze it. And if I want to destroy it, I would have to return to my original form. If I transform into a dragon over something as petty as this and rampage, I would only

be stacking up more panic on top of the variant uproar. And most importantly, Makoto-kun's impression of me would lower. I won't do it. Don't want to interfere with Makoto-kun" (Root)

"… Fuh, we don't mind holding the title of Dragon Slayer though. In terms of not being able to do anything, your side is more into that-ja shi" (Tomoe)

"Please pardon me from that. And? Is it over by tomorrow?" (Root)

Tomoe and Root were talking.

Maybe there's no worries of anyone hearing, they are not using aliases, and they show no signs of hiding their plans.

"That's how it is estimated-ja. A bit after the reinforcements arrive, we can just do the troublesome clean up and that's it-ja" (Tomoe)

"Troublesome huh. And Makoto-kun?" (Root)

"If the current Waka learns of this, he might turn into a bad direction. What should I do… It may be safer. I decided to clean up without telling him" (Tomoe)

"I see" (Root)

"It's something troublesome-ja yo. If the ones stealthily doing things weren't the demon race, it would be easier. Demon General Rona huh. She probably wanted some results no matter how it rolled. Waka has to be a bit more experienced, or those kind of people will only serve as poison for him" (Tomoe)

"If I remember correctly, Makoto-kun told her to withdraw her troops right?" (Root)

"Umu. I didn't enquire in detail if he said demon race or troops, but he did say it. She probably didn't listen to exactly what Waka asked, so there's not much point even if I ask in detail. Rona won't abide to it that much" (Tomoe)

"In that sense, Makoto-kun is similar to Mio. Can be called good-natured, or careless" (Root)

Root thinks of Makoto as if having fun.

He isn't using complicated words with deep meaning.

Makoto is the type that once someone listens to his request, he will honestly consider them as allies.

It is a type of person that is easy to treat, but also dangerous.

Because they easily hurry.

Just that, even when Root understands all this, he still considers Makoto as interesting.

He sees him as an existence that can "stir up" more than he has seen before.

"Earnestly training his body, shooting the bow; he is a person that lived his life with those activities as his core after all. He is thickheaded to the evil of the wide society-ja" (Tomoe)

"That's why you are leaving the wealthy and the people that might be bad influence for Makoto-kun, for later?" (Root)

"No. That's simply because of my inclination. If the people there reduce in numbers, the reconstruction will be slightly smoother, right? Also, if you are displeased to the point that you want to take advantage of the situation and rampage, it would be better to let out your feelings, or it will haunt you later" (Tomoe)

"And so, I should ignore the action of those demi-humans?" (Root)

"There's a collaborator in the demon race aside from the blue-skinned. It's just that I thought it would be a bit too fast to show Waka. Mio will deal with it tonight" (Tomoe)

"Oh, scary. So you won't vindicate her or shelter her?" (Root)

"She is someone that hates hyumans unnecessarily much. I don't think she would be of much use. It's not like I am a protector of demi-humans or anything like that. Waka as well" (Tomoe)

Tomoe indifferently talks about circumstances Makoto doesn't know about.

The strange movements of the variants that the Forest Oni Eris noticed, Tomoe also noticed it.

She also knows of the one that is controlling them.

And she marked that person as someone that is in collaboration with the demon race.

Just as Root said 'her', they also know the gender of that person.

If they investigated, they would be able to learn more details, or maybe, they already know all the details.

But for that person to move there, it seems Tomoe and Root didn't expect that.

Thinking about the current Makoto's way of thinking and position, Tomoe decided to finish it without telling her master.

Tomoe was secretly grateful that Makoto left the management of this turmoil to her.

"Also… wait for a bit" (Root)

Tomoe was going to ask Root: "What's up?", but she shut her mouth herself.

Thought transmission.

Root probably noticed. Without interfering, he silently observes Tomoe's expression.

Her face frowns for an instant.

The content was probably not good. Root's interest was piqued.

But after that, she returned to her normal face and continued the thought transmission. After several minutes, she silently exhales.

Looks like her thought transmission finished.

“From who?” (Root)

“Waka-ja” (Tomoe)

“Makoto-kun! Heh～ what did he say? Did something happen inside the barrier?” (Root)

“You really don’t show self-restraint. It wasn’t anything big. It’s just that, Waka was about to catch tail about that demi-human-ja” (Tomoe)

“Hmph～, so he also noticed” (Root)

“No. It seems Eris said something. Seriously, that girl really does unnecessary things-ja na” (Tomoe)

“I am slightly interested though. In the one who produced that demi-human” (Root)

“Also, he asked me if it was okay to restore the thought transmission” (Tomoe)

“He asked? He is the master, so it should be fine if he just restores thought transmission if he wants to. Maybe he is showing restrain since he left you in charge?” (Root)

“Might be. There’s already no problems with that, so I told him I don’t mind” (Tomoe)

“Eh?” (Root)

Root makes a strained expression and blurts out a question at the nonchalant words of Tomoe.

“What? Do you have any problems with the restoration of the thought transmission? You will probably be able to see beautiful fireworks in person. Waka’s handmade-ja” (Tomoe)

“Ah, no… I see, right now huh” (Root)

“You had me talk the whole time. Root, you are hiding something right?” (Tomoe)

“It’s not so big enough to call it hiding. It’s just that you didn’t ask. Fumu…” (Root)

“Aren’t you troubled? But you also made a strained expression. And right now you look like you are having fun-ja. Root, what are you hiding?” (Tomoe)

“You will probably notice as soon as the thought transmission is restored. Even so, Tomoe” (Root)

“Hm?” (Tomoe)

“Fate probably does exist. How truly mysterious” (Root)

With a meek countenance, Root mutters.

Nodding several times, he consented while maintaining his silence.

Tomoe, who is next to Root, sighs at him who has entered his own world.

And then, she turns her eyes at the place where Makoto is currently at.

She slowly turns her gaze upwards and waits for the moment.

“Root, it’s Waka-ja” (Tomoe)

“Hm?” (Root)

With Tomoe’s words and her finger pointing at the sky, Root looks up and sees a subdued yellow ball of light, that resembles the moon, being shot up.

That light stops for a while in the sky as if illuminating the town.

And then, it exploded.

Turning into absurd amounts of strings, it didn’t limit itself to the town, it rained on the whole zone.

Some made acute angles, bending several times, and there are some that just go straight.

Without a chance to defend against it, it pierces through the body of Root and Tomoe.

“?!!”

“One shot huh. Waka is truly the type that polishes one talent-ja” (Tomoe)

Root who had his arms crossed, unlinked those arms.

“That just now… could it be, it was aimed at what the demon race prepared?” (Root)

“Umu. There’s no real need to destroy them after all. As long as they stop working, that’s fine. There’s a method to do so, even without placing power in the attack. Waka did so in that way-ja na” (Tomoe)

“… All of them?” (Root)

“I wonder. There doesn’t seem to be a second shot, so he probably got all of them” (Tomoe)

“The demon race took several months to prepare them though” (Root)

“How hardworking-ja na” (Tomoe)

The two stayed looking at the sky for a while.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

“Eris. How did Waka enter here?” (Akua)

“Used” (Eris)

“Used?” (Akua)

“He did a foul play by using an Earth Dragon” (Eris)

“He summoned a dragon?!” (Akua)

“Something even worse. An existence that’s proved to be the best at

digging holes, the mole～” (Eris)

“… Eris, d-didn’t you say that this was a perfectly isolated place?” (Akua)

“I didn’t imagine that one. It seems it dug quite deep, that mole～” (Eris)

“… I will never help you again. This spell has died as of today” (Akua)

“I’m going to cry” (Eris)

The spell Makoto created to deal with the thought transmission jamming, that firework-looking spell, was blocked by the barrier, and those two were unable to see it.

Akua and Eris were devastated.

Chapter 148: Sudden Turn

(This is unbelievable)

The person that manages the rituals of Lorel and possesses strong political weight as well, in other words, the person Makoto considers a ‘big-shot’, Sairitz.

Learning about the light that illuminated the night sky for an instant, she could feel cold sweat flowing on her cheek.

The calamity that swallowed even the neighboring towns. Because of one of the incidents in it, the thought transmission jamming, Sairitz was 90% sure that all of this was caused by the demon race.

The demon race that has advanced their knowledge in magic a lot more than the hyumans. If it’s something they set, it would be quite difficult to resolve the issue at an early stage.

No, she thought that way.

(So this is the result of his ‘I will try’. I will abide to my promise of keeping it secret. Just because of a mere verbal promise, the situation was solved so easily. With an existence so out of norm like Raidou, as expected, he is without a doubt a Wise. And on top of that, one that has quite a lot of power compared to his antecessors. It would be troublesome to have Limia and Gritonia know, but there’s finally the need to take him in) (Sairitz)

Conciliate with the person, take that person in, and enclose it; Sairitz possesses several methods to achieve that.

There’s appealing methods, fear and pain inducing methods; truly varied.

But Sairitz decided to not use the negative methods for now.

Because she learned about the dangers of doing so.

(If possible, I would want to use his emotions to bind him. Because if we try to force him to do as we want, our country might get crushed into pieces. Inviting him, tempt him into interest, and bringing him to Lorel is the number one priority. Have him learn of the Wises' deeds of the past and make him feel deep affection is second. It would be ideal if it reached the point where he thought of our country as his second hometown, but well, I want to make it feel natural. For now, it would be better to make my invitations light. No, the thing I should focus on is reducing the contact between him and other countries) (Sairitz)

She doesn't know what kind of easy and scary method the demon race uses to jam the thought transmission.

Could it be a level of understanding the hyumans are far from reaching, or maybe a plan that they took a lot of time to prepare in order to make it work?

And yet, there's people that carefreely thwart those plans, with small numbers.

Kuzunoha Company, and their master, Raidou.

Honestly speaking, they surpassed by leaps and bounds the power and scale that Sairitz initially anticipated.

Battle power that can heedlessly take care of variants, and knowledge that can easily destroy the plans of the demon race.

On top of that, the sword one of his followers named Tomoe showed a few days ago; the teleporting sword.

Counting all those factors in, in the worst case scenario, it can even reach the level where they are able to destroy countries.

Imprudently provoking them would be extremely stupid, and to hand them over to another country would be practically the same as giving them her own country, is what she thought.

And so, revising her evaluation of Raidou and looking at him again, Sairitz felt like her consciousness would fly away after learning about how dangerous of an existence he is.

At first glance, he looks like a docile person.

Thinking about his real strength, it is to an impossible level even if taking into account that the evaluation of Raidou was low at first glance.

That's why, thinking about the people that have a bit of power, nobles, wealthy merchants, or people that easily get arrogant, that might try acting in a pressuring manner towards him, and if by chance his mood is harmed by that attitude; simply thinking about it makes Sairitz have cold sweat.

Also, Raidou has a liking towards demi-humans and employs them.

If certain demi-humans that have been unreasonably treated by the hyumans enter their ranks and the Kuzunoha Company begins to move for their sake, what would happen?

Not only cold sweat, Sairitz wouldn't be able to sleep for several days.

Without doubt, they would be able to make a demi-human country on the level of the four major powers. To have five major powers; not a joke that can be laughed at.

(There's Wise that don't hold discrimination towards demi-humans, so it is scary that I can't even joke about it. That situation would still have salvation, but in the worst case, if he were to support the demon race…) (Sairitz)

Sairitz stopped thinking in the middle.

Because she thought that having demi-humans as their allies and creating a country on the level of the four major powers is still in the level of cute. In her mind,something even scarier popped up.

The unification of the world.

The demon race that challenges the Goddess.

It would turn into a situation that can be considered the end of the world.

Kuzunoha Company is a double-edged sword.

A sword of calamity that has the power to cut countries apart.

(This is the worst. I feel like I am participating in a roulette with destruction written in it for eternity) (Sairitz)

While feeling discomfort similar to anemia, Sairitz touches her forehead with her right hand.

The sticky sweat felt cold, and it was denoting her current mental state.

“Sairitz-sama, so you were here!”

“… What happened?” (Sairitz)

She wasn’t feeling well, but when her subordinate called her, she reacted and lifted her head.

“Yes, it is an emergency. Please return to the shelter at once!”

“Emergency? Tonight there’s nothing aside from the meeting Falz-dono proposed though, did something-” (Sairitz)

“At any rate, just hurry please!”

Sairitz felt it was slightly rude of the subordinate to cut her words, but she judged that something must have happened, so she followed her subordinate and entered the courtyard’s shelter.

A tense atmosphere she didn’t feel when she left, and the noisiness as if she returned to the first day of the incident, surprised Sairitz.

The back of the subordinate that was short of words was already far away. Sairitz regretted that she didn’t calm down a bit more and had him explain the situation.

(This doesn’t look like a trivial matter. The most I know is that our dragon units are supposed to arrive by early morning, but I haven’t received any report of it yet. Maybe they have obtained new information after the thought transmission was recovered) (Sairitz)

‘And it is not good information’, is what Sairitz added internally.

Walking towards the place where the hurriedness is the highest, Sairitz saw the representative of a major power with a complexion she normally doesn’t see that person with.

The Limia King is personally giving orders violently. The prince and the convalescent knight are also moving busily.

The Gritonia Princess is giving out orders to her several subordinates, however, she shows an unconcealable irritated expression from time to time. Well, Sairitz is skilled at looking at people, so she is able to detect the slight changes in the expressions of others.

Even if she stays in place, she won’t understand anything in detail.

The action Sairitz took, was to enter that place.

“Limia, Gritonia; just what in the world is happening to make the representatives of major powers like this?” (Sairitz)

The response for the calm words of Sairitz, were a pair of harsh expressions.

Limia King, Princess Lily.

What both of them had in common was their impatience.

“… Sairitz-dono huh. I have something I want to ask quickly. Where’s Raidou?” (King)

“Same here. I want to know where Raidou is” (Lily)

“Just a moment ago I met with him. Just like how you two said, I requested him to somehow restore the thought transmission” (Sairitz)

And then, without even 10 minutes after, it was restored.

If she accepts the reality of that, she can’t help but feel shivers all over her body.

She doesn't understand the reason why they didn't move until after several days, but this means that, if the situation requires it, they can act in a heartless manner.

The more faces she sees of their company, the more terrifying it looks.

"… As expected, if it's them, they are able to do it huh. Or maybe, they were able to, but didn't do it? No, this is something we decided, right now it is not the time for that. The time it would take to look for him is precious. In that case, the moment we are able to make contact with him, it would be best if we wait for him at the entrance of the shelter" (King)

"I will accompany" (Lily)

Limia King and the one accompanying him, the prince, and also Princess Lily, lined up and began to walk towards the exit.

Sairitz, who hasn't heard about the situation yet, was anxious.

Trying to somehow understand the situation, she catches up with the back of the two and requests an explanation.

Because they seem to be the ones that know the most. No, her intuition was telling her that they were a related party.

"Both of you, please explain me the situation" (Sairitz)

"… It's a raid"

"Raid?" (Sairitz)

Limia King fires words with a loathsome expression. And Sairitz returns it with a question.

"The demon race, Sairitz-dono" (King)

"Yeah, I do think this incident with the variants was caused by the demons but…" (Sairitz)

"That's not it. In the homegrounds" (King)

“The imperial capital” (Lily)

“!!”

A scream that can’t be turned into words filled the throat of Sairitz.

Because the words the representatives said were a scary truth.

The advance of the demon race.

News that shake the world.

“I know that it is an inane plan to provoke Raidou, but in this kind of situation, we have no choice but to ask for the unreasonable of him” (King)

“Totally agree your Majesty. One step wrong and their teleportation might turn into a threat. If it were to damage the sword, I would be secretly happy about it though” (Lily)

“Oya, how dangerous. Is Lily-sama stating that they are a threat?” (Sairitz)

“Sairitz-dono, let me state this frankly, this is not the time to be chit-chatting. The moment we secretly agreed on how to deal with them, it made us practically into accomplices. Please don’t forget that” (Lily)

“?!!”

“I hold the same opinion as the Empire’s princess. Sairitz-dono, you still don’t fully understand the situation yet. Listen well, the ones attacking are an army that is being led by a demon general. The ones being attacked are the capital of my country and the empire’s municipal. In other words, Lorel’s important Priestess-dono is also fighting” (King)

“Chiya-sama too?! Your Majesty, what do you mean by that?! For the capital to be attacked and have both the hero-sama and priestess-sama in the middle of battle is just… isn’t that strange?! What is the army of the kingdom doing?! To let the enemies infiltrate so far and haven’t let the hero-sama and its party escape is

just… that's abandoning their responsibility towards the world and-" (Sairitz)

"Shut up!" (Lily)

Seeing that Sairitz suddenly began blaming Limia King, Lily shouted.

Being cut off in the middle of her words, Sairitz looked like she still had more to say as she glared at Lily.

For her, no, for Lorel, the Priestess is that much of an important existence.

Just by having the Priestess that the residents in the country hold deep affection for, in another country, they hold no good affection towards Limia, and yet, on top of that, if she hears that danger is approaching them, it can't be helped that she would lose her calm for a moment there.

The reason why she acts more friendlier with Princess Lily than to the Limia King, is also because of this.

"Listen well, Sairitz-dono. My country's imperial capital is facing several enemy units already. And it seems they all appeared at the same time. We are currently trying to handle the situation, investigating from what direction they came attacking from. Limia is also the same" (Lily)

"At our country, it seems they detected a black mass appearing at the coast and advancing. It is already close to approaching the capital. I don't understand what's going on anymore. Those guys hold several trump cards?" (King)

"We need to revise the current battle progress as well. The aim of the demon race that holds the iron wall Stella Fort and is able to fight against both the Kingdom and the Empire. One wrong step and it might prove fatal. That's how it is, so if you think that we are doing something excessive in our negotiations with Raidou, enter in the middle of it and make a good follow-up. It is not a bad deal right? His impression of us will lower, and his impression of you

will increase after all" (Lily)

"I don't care if I am the carrot or the stick, I just want to dispatch him to my country" (King)

"I also have to give commands in the imperial capital. I have to at least avoid the hero-sama of ending up in a hopeless situation" (Lily)

Impatience also begins welling up from Sairitz.

The Priestess might die.

The Priestess of the next era has not been born yet.

If Chiya dies, Lorel will lose the fulcrum for their spirit. Moreover, if something happens to Limia and Gritonia, Lorel will also turn into a country standing in the frontlines.

If those two catastrophes were to overlap, just what would happen to the country, it isn't something she can predict at all.

"Could it be that… using the variants here was a decoy in itself?!" (Sairitz)

"I don't think it is a complete coincidence" (King)

"I want to believe that it is a coincidence there are more VIP gathered this year than normal, but if information about Academy Town being attacked appears, it is obvious that the other countries will send troops and supplies. As a decoy it has a lot of inconsistency, but it will surely show some sort of effectiveness" (Lily)

"We were on the misconception that the demon race would stay in Stella Fort maintaining defense like a turtle, so even if we were to send troops, we would only need to delay our attack to the Fort. And because we had that way of thinking, we lowered our guard. They splendidly got the better of us. How irritating" (King)

"Well, it isn't all bad news. At the very least, restoring thought transmission with this timing, it should be safe to assume that

Kuzunoha Company and Raidou are not spies of the demon race" (Lily)

"Even if we endure this, it wouldn't be a laughing matter if they used that teleport technique to attack us while we are in an audience after all. If Raidou were someone that is in cahoots with the demon race, he wouldn't have restored the thought transmission. In that part, I am also slightly relieved" (King)

The three representatives of the major powers were talking while walking in quick pace. Without waiting for their escorts to catch up, they arrived at the entrance of the shelter.

They felt every second as long. Painful tens of minutes pass.

A major power King, a major power royalty, and a person with high position in a major power.

The player that is making this many major power leading personages wait, Raidou, received a call from the Academy and appears in front of the shelter.

Tomoe and Shiki; two followers of his and Falz-dono, the Adventurer Guild's master, were accompanying him.

"Raidou, we have to talk" (King)

"It is something incredibly important" (Lily)

"I am sorry that this has to come as soon as I made a request before" (Sairitz)

Three restless voices were shot at Raidou simultaneously.

He showed surprise for a second, but not long after, without showing any hesitation in his expression, he bowed in front of the three.

His followers also follow his lead.

While they hear the talk of the three, Raidou's face gradually turns severe.

The King thought that this reaction was brought by his hate towards the demon race.

But the truth was different.

Raidou (Makoto) felt insecure, thinking that his days would pass without ever meeting the two Japanese that came to this world, and the anger towards the truth about this attack of Rona being a decoy; those two emotions were warping his expression.

The long night slowly advances.

Chapter 149: Enquiry with Shiki-sensei

The Academy's main entrance.

In these several days, it is a place that has no people around when it is late at night.

Normally, it is a gate that would have lights on like a nightless city, and there would also be decent amount of students coming and going.

And yet, right now it is just like an antique lamp with a magic formation, shining dimly into the lonely streets.

Shiki and I; only the two of us were walking there. We didn't really have any target location in mind, we were just separating from the noisy place.

If something happens we will run there, but I think they won't call me so soon.

"The Limia King and the Empire's Princess as well. They were showing quite the agitation" (Shiki)

"If their capital city is being attacked, isn't that the obvious state? Even in this world, as expected, it is still bad when your capital is attacked huh" (Makoto)

"Right. It depends on the situation, but in this case where they are receiving a surprise attack, I think it would be considered quite the 'bad' situation" (Shiki)

"Then they would definitely be agitated. But it seems there's Rona and one other demon general. Why are those guys attacking themselves when they were encamped in the Stella Fort that is

boasted as the impenetrable wall? If they leave, they will lose that defensive power, right?" (Makoto)

"If their objective is to chip off their opponent's forces, it would be better to not leave. But it's a war, so they must attack at some point in time, or they won't be able to defeat their opponent. Moreover, if they give their opponent the impression that they are usually secluded in their fortress, it would be easy to make a surprise attack" (Shiki)

I try asking about the demon race advance that I heard a while ago, with Shiki.

The imperial capital Asuta and Luinas. Honestly speaking, I don't understand the reason why they made a simultaneous attack.

From what I have learned in history class, having two battles at the same time in war is normally a bad move.

If you want to do something like that, you must have quite the difference in power, or you will be defeated.

I haven't heard the details about numbers and the strategy, but I kind of understood the words my history teacher was trying to say.

Because I think that even if there are two enemies, it would definitely be easier to defeat them one by one instead of going for both at the same time after all.

Moreover, if the demon race gets attacked by both countries at the same time, they possess the means to defend against it.

Making a conjecture from what Tomoe said, I don't think the demon race has that much leeway to go into the offensive though.

"Well, the objective of the demon race is to defeat the hyumans, so attacking isn't something strange" (Makoto)

"Limia and Gritonia who understand the state of the battle of both countries, it seems their agitation differs slightly. Even if they possess a hero, there's no way they wouldn't know… No, they are hyumans, so it might be possible?" (Shiki)

Shiki seems to be trying to answer me, and it also looks like he is asking himself.

I think he also needs to arrange his thoughts regarding this matter of the demon race advance.

Well even if I say this, he probably has a clearer image than me.

Mio is still taking care of something and hasn't returned yet. And Tomoe is in Asora.

Having Shiki tell me is the fastest way.

Root is also an option, but he went somewhere with Sairitz-san, so I can't just force myself in between them.

"Is there anything strange?" (Makoto)

"When the demon race stopped their advance, they used their time arranging their domestic affairs, making military preparations, and researching techniques. Plainly said, they were increasing the power of their country" (Shiki)

The latter half was really easy to understand.

They stopped their steps in order to increase their power.

"Yeah, if I remember correctly, they increased their territory, so they needed the time to stabilize, right?" (Makoto)

"Yes. In other words, they are not the selves that made a big march in the past. This is a matter of course" (Shiki)

"They even have a tool that blocks the interference of the Goddess, so that's a given" (Makoto)

"They probably have already predicted that they would create a countermeasure for them. The demon race currently possesses magic that surpasses the hyumans. The hyumans obviously should have this in mind already, but…" (Shiki)

"But?" (Makoto)

“Looking at the reaction of both countries, it felt as if they didn’t expect it at all. Even I understand the content of the demon race attack this time. They were taking their time developing magic formations that can hide, so they utilized this and divided the units in subdivisions, slowly mobilizing them by hiding in the forests and valleys. After that, they used a teleportation marker, and had the others teleport to where they are. In the Empire’s case, they did it in several points, but I don’t think the method differed much. The only thing they most likely did was just increase the number of markers” (Shiki)

“… I see” (Makoto)

It’s certainly true that the demon race easily infiltrated this town by disguising as hyumans, and there were also in Lorel.

A spell that fakes the appearance.

Then what Shiki said: “concealing a unit”, might be possible.

When I met with Sairitz-san, I asked her about those two demons disguised as guards, and it seems those two returned by the order of the country.

In other words, in Lorel there’s at least another demon infiltrated who is in a position that can give out orders.

The demons seemed to be trying to recruit me, but thinking about the relationship between the demon race and the hyumans, I am most likely a special case. There’s probably demons infiltrated in the countries.

The teleportation as well, they just need to make a marker in the coast of a lake and have them gather there. It isn’t that difficult of a thing.

If the demon race also has the knowledge of Shiki, it isn’t something they wouldn’t be able to do.

Be it thought transmission, disguising, or teleportation skill; the demon race is quite ahead of the hyumans.

Hyumans are used to receiving from the Goddess and spirits, so they don't have the conception of developing by themselves like the demon race. Only a few of them possess that way of thinking, and that makes a big difference.

From what I can guess, the difference is comparable to the Industrial Revolution of Europe and that of Asia. But the hyumans have the blessing of the Goddess and her assistance. This is proof that the composition is, so to speak, quite different.

"If the hyumans evaluate the demon race's magic as low, or they think that they will somehow be able to get through this with only the Goddess' blessing… they might lose" (Shiki)

"No way" (Makoto)

"No, I also think there's no way they would do that. There's no way they would think that they already have victory because of the Goddess' awakening and the descent of the heroes. And countries in the frontline like Limia and Gritonia should have stolen a few techniques of the demons" (Shiki)

"Well, if the enemy has superior technique, that's the obvious course of action right?" (Makoto)

"But they weren't able to handle this level of thought transmission jamming. Don't you think it is strange that the King and the princess were unable to personally deal with it? They are statesmen; not technicians nor magicians. But if they are unable to send thought transmissions from their own capital, which possesses their specialists, to this town, that means they haven't even stolen the technique to use thought transmission in the battlefield" (Shiki)

"……"

Certainly.

"Also, the Limia King and the Gritonia Princess said that the attack to this town was a decoy. And they said it in a way that seemed as if they didn't know what would happen next" (Shiki)

"Why? People of important positions gathered at Rotsgard, and the

demons create an incident they can't neglect. It pissed me that they did so without caring that I am here but, this being a decoy shouldn't be a mistake right?" (Makoto)

"Waka-sama, please excuse me. This town was probably in its essence, buying time, or maybe just a simple set off. The point is, this was only something to avert their eyes even if for an instant. Just by having royalty level people coming to Rotsgard, the plan had already achieved the minimum success. In the worst case, where no troops from any country mobilize, it wouldn't have been a problem for the demons. At that time, the variants would overflow in all parts of the town and Rotsgard would have fallen. There's no demerits for the demon race. And in truth, if we weren't here, the Academy wouldn't have been able to find the weak point and by this moment, the town would have over a hundred variants" (Shiki)

By the second day, the increment stopped practically completely and didn't reach the hundreds, but well, I do understand the point.

If the issue was left untouched, there would have probably been several hundreds appearing.

In the current state, the hyumans can push back the variants with pure numbers.

"Yeah, this town would have probably been done for. With no chance for reinforcements to come. The reinforcements that would have come might have entered the stage where they have to stop the variants from spreading" (Makoto)

"No matter how much the variants rampage, there's no demerits for the demon race. It is actually a grateful thing. Because that would only mean that hyumans will not see the danger approaching from their backs after all" (Shiki)

"Then the town is in a better state than what Rona was planning it to be" (Makoto)

"Yeah. In that woman's plans, it may be a success, but this might be one of the bad scenarios. She was able to somehow draw a part of the Kingdom and Empire's army, and the reinforcements from Aion

that were planned to be used for the attack at Stella Fort are being held back in the neighboring towns. I think, at most, she is grieving at the fact that the time she put onto this plan is not giving the appropriate results" (Shiki)

"What about Lorel?" (Makoto)

"You did say that they have demons infiltrated in their escorts, but she probably estimated that Lorel would only send supplies at most. Rona probably thought about pillaging and obstructing, but since the demons here were withdrawn, I don't know the particulars" (Shiki)

Sounds scary.

So they were even planning to cut off supplies.

Truly what I call a worthy decoy!

"Isn't that a splendid decoy?" (Makoto)

"… If that were really the case, they would have probably made the scale a bit wider. Rona's true decoy is… the Empire, Waka-sama" (Shiki)

"!!"

What?!

I was surprised by the sudden words of Shiki that sounded as if he were sure of it.

There shouldn't be that much difference in the amount of information he and I have, and yet, how was he able to reach to that conclusion?!

So the small silence before his words were because he was amazed?

I am actually trying my best here you know.

… Please give me a bit more time.

“From the Kingdom, all troops march from the same direction; at the Empire, they are divided in several places, ones at the direction of Stella and others from Ruinas; and then, there’s also the nature of both countries’ main forces. On top of that, there’s the demon race’s current state, period and season. As long as the truth that they are attacking stands, their aim is the Kingdom” (Shiki)

His eyes flashed.

Ah, he kind of reminded me of the past Shiki, no, of Lich.

He has those unpleasant eyes he has when he is scheming something.

“So they are going to bring down the Kingdom” (Makoto)

That’s quite the predicament.

It will corner the hyumans by one step more.

“No. Their aim is the most valuable asset of the Kingdom” (Shiki)

“Most valuable asset?” (Makoto)

“Must be the hero. They intend to bring down the hero” (Shiki)

“?!”

Shocking words.

It has only been around 1 year since we arrived to this world.

And the demon race is already at the step in war where they intend to kill the hero?

“I have heard about the natures of the heroes, but instead of the Empire’s puppet hero, the Kingdom hero that creates fanaticism is more dangerous” (Shiki)

A puppet and a fanatic huh.

Ah, if I remember correctly, Tomoe and Mio said something about this in the past.

The power to attract people and the power to charm people.

Mio thought of both things as the same, but Tomoe said that those two are different.

Charm them and turn them into prisoners. What's ahead of that path is a puppet that can't move without its master's orders.

Attract people and pull them. What's ahead of that path is a madman that does desperate efforts for the sake of those people.

That's how it goes if you delve deeper into both paths.

At one point, charm does work the same as charisma, but the end result is different, or so she said.

The influence on the people that receive this effect to the limit, I have never seen it, so I can't say much about it.

"Well, the people that are completely charmed won't be able to move without their master's words. The very meaning of pitiful. 'If I take other actions aside from the ones that person has said, that person will hate me, I will be thrown away'; that kind of fear will bind the target. And if they end up unable to do anything, it will be like putting the cart before the horse. Having people that can only move when given detailed orders is no different from Golems" (Tomoe)

"Waka-sama is my everything, but well… I don't intend to lose to anyone in terms of being charmed" (Mio)

I suddenly remember the talk of Tomoe and Mio.

Our side is so peaceful.

"That's the difference of a charm brought upon by a skill, and a charm that's not brought by it. But if I remember correctly, several tens of adventurers from Tsige went to Limia right? Something about them being led by the hero. Isn't the Kingdom a more difficult opponent in terms of fighting force?" (Makoto)

Adventurers that can fight decently in the wasteland.

They possess the know-how of fighting.

Even if the demons want to crush them, I think it would be pretty difficult.

“Waka-sama. Just like how you said, the ones that possess the most power in the Kingdom are those adventurers and the hero party. But those adventurers also have a big weakness” (Shiki)

“Weakness?” (Makoto)

“They are a power that has learned to fight in the wasteland. After going to the Kingdom, they probably learned a few ways to fight in groups. To a level where they can have an active role in the battlefield” (Shiki)

“Well, that’s a given” (Makoto)

“However, they have a trait that has been ingrained in them from the very beginning. They are adventurers. Even if they are good at attacking, they are not used to defending towns, bases, and specially places of wide scale. Mercenaries and knights might be a different story, but adventurers are essentially carefree. If we take 100 as one’s power, it would be like being able to only bring out 50 of that inside a forest” (Shiki)

“Tsige has also been attacked by mamonos, so they should be able to protect right? It shouldn’t be that extreme” (Makoto)

“It would be good if that were the case. ‘A base that has held on for 1 year in the wasteland will prosper’, is what a saying goes. If I were to fight an adventurer, I would force the fight in a forest. There will be the chance that it will affect victory, and if it is a place that shows clear effects, even more. A defensive battle where they have to fight while minding the residents, even a knight would have a difficult time in that situation. If you put a surprise attack in that equation, I wonder how the morale will turn out” (Shiki)

“… Is the Kingdom going to fall?” (Makoto)

Should I go save them?

But it is a hero I have never met before, and a place that has been influenced by the Goddess.

If I go and help Limia, the chances that my connection with them will deepen is really high.

The best would be to have it go well without me going.

I asked Shiki if there's such a chance.

"I wonder. I don't think it will reach the point of destruction. If there's enough damage to consider it fallen, the hero would have run somewhere else already. However, if the damage is only in the capital, the hero is dead. It isn't like the demon race has much leeway. This battle also holds the coercion that this is the beginning of a big march. In other words, a bluff. If they are able to at least kill the hero, I don't think they will go to the point of trampling down the Kingdom. Of course, that's only if my conjecture is correct. I am not a 100% sure. There's a portion that's still opaque, and it would be difficult to predict all the thoughts of the Demon Lord and Rona" (Shiki)

A bluff huh.

But they are fully intent to kill the hero.

I remember the words of Tsukuyomi-sama.

'Please take care of them', huh.

But even if I think about going to save them, we are also in quite the stalemate.

We have no 'means' to go all the way to Limia.

"'There's not enough power, so don't delve too deep into it yet' huh" (Makoto)

"The north is entering winter. In that case, no matter if it's defending or attacking, the snow and ice will get in the way. Marching in the middle of intense cold is suicidal. It is a good season to win and escape" (Shiki)

“… But even if we want to go help them, teleporting there is…” (Makoto)

“Ah, right. Tomoe-dono is…” (Shiki)

Right.

I remember the conversation Tomoe had with the important people a few moments ago.

The circumstances about how using teleportation would be bad.

Chapter 150: Root's miscalculation

Tomoe, Shiki and I were approached by the top class guests: the Limia King, Princess Lily, and Sairitz-san; they requested us for the teleport of both countries, Limia and Gritonia.

After that, won't that leave the church people here? It seems the Aion people have already left the neighboring towns and headed towards Stella Fort after all.

'We also used the teleport when assisting the Merchant Guild so it is already close to its limit', is the total lie Tomoe said with an apologetic expression. The Limia King and Princess Lily lowered their heads, lined up words that can only be taken as threats, and requested for the teleport no matter the method needed.

Sairitz-san soothed the situation every now and then, but Tomoe evasively apologized. When those two changed their target to me, I seriously got scared.

As expected, when there's their country at stake, their intensity is different.

It's like, their grit.

Princess Lily looks slightly older than me, and yet, her aura was completely different from mine.

I don't know if it's their linage or their education, but they are incredible people.

Strangely, it was scary, but I didn't feel that weakness I felt when I was dealing with Zara-san.

In a corner of my self, I still held composure and was able to ignore

it.

(Waka, it is already enough. Please nod. You did well) (Tomoe)

Tomoe's thought transmission.

At the moment I was thinking about throwing it back to Tomoe, she came and told me.

That's a great help.

[Understood. This is an emergency situation, so it can't be helped. Tomoe, can you do it?]

After a lot of pushing and pulling, I finally nodded.

It is something that I can do to begin with, and being unable to do it is Tomoe's total lie.

Things will probably line up later.

"… Waka, it isn't something impossible, and if you tell me to do it, this Tomoe will do so as you wish, but if one teleport is done, the sword won't be able to handle another one" (Tomoe)

[What do you mean by that?]

"It will most likely break. And it will probably be impossible to repair. Is it really okay? To sacrifice this sword that has been supporting Kuzunoha Company until now?" (Tomoe)

I see…

Changing the teleport basis to a tool.

In other words, when the tool is broken, it will make the person believe that you will be unable to use it anymore.

I finally understood the true reason as to why they made such a pretext like placing the teleport power to a short katana.

So we will not be using teleport from now on? Or she already has another pretext to use teleport later on?

At any rate, I will follow the play of Tomoe.

[I don't mind. This is a request from the people holding back the demon race in the war. If we are able to be of help, I want to cooperate. I don't know if there's a substitute for that sword, but if destiny so wishes, we will meet again]

"… Understood" (Tomoe)

With a face as if facing mental agony, Tomoe acts as if she is troubled, and she separates a bit from Limia King, Princess Lily, Sairitz-san, and Root who at some point in time was already beside those three.

Things like: 'The distance to the capital is way too much' and 'If it's the Empire, it will only reach until the town Robin which is close to the highway' are the details she was creating.

After a while, Tomoe unsheathes the short katana, and while placing major emphasis, she opened a mist gate.

Limia's King and the knight entered that gate and disappear. For some reason, the prince stayed.

After that, Princess Lily and several people that seem to be her close aides disappear inside a gate that was created separately. At this side, a number of people that looked like chamberlain stayed.

And then, the sword broke.

With a grim face, Tomoe falls on her knees.

What a nice act. That's a fake sword right there.

Of course, I won't be saying it.

The eyes of Sairitz-san, the prince, and the chamberlains showed slight signs of relief as they look at Tomoe.

Maybe it is relief that we won't be able to use teleport anymore.

Well, we have the teleport ability and the power to fight against

variants, so thinking about both of those points, it is probably a pretty scary thing.

I wanted to ask the bitter-faced Tomoe what's with those feelings of hers as a bit of opposition, but I decided to just go to where she is and place a hand on her shoulder.

[Are you okay, Tomoe? I am sorry]

(Kukuku, those guys are getting relieved. Seriously, it is because they are so naive that the demon race is playing them like a fiddle. How stupid) (Tomoe)

It was a waste to even try to act worried.

In the end, she asked me to leave her alone for a while and I gave her the permission to. After that, we reached the courtyard where Tomoe separated from us.

When she said 'alone', she secretly told me in thought transmission that she will be in Asora, so Tomoe is in Asora right now.

And that's why, if we teleport now, it would be bad.

"The battle's outcome will hinge on how much power the heroes possess. Well, the demon race has already taken that into account, and that's why they are aiming for a short decisive battle. As long as there's no special situation occurring, the events will advance as the demon race planned" (Shiki)

"Is there a good hand we can play while we are in Rotsgard?" (Makoto)

"Yes. It may be bad for us to head there ourselves, but if it's, for example, the winged-kin and the Gorgon who no one knows their connection with us; and there's also the choice on sending the Arkes to provide support" (Shiki)

"That's not a viable option. To send someone from Asora to a battlefield where none of us is in, that's an absolute no. Also, the winged-kin fly in the sky you know? Won't they turn into good targets?" (Makoto)

"… Waka-sama, the winged-kin is quite the strong race. Maybe they can even bring down a country by themselves. Try watching a fight of them against the other races. It is just that their ability to fight against Waka-sama is despairingly low. Also, the Gorgons, if they were sent out to the battlefield, they possess a terrifying ability that can end the battle. At worst, we can arbitrarily dispel the petrification of the ones we want to. No problems there. It is not a petrification that brings instant-death. They are very special ability-users after all" (Shiki)

When I reject the idea of using only the people residing in Asora as fighting force, Shiki comes at me in a slightly serious manner.

Are the winged-kin actually strong?

Not only can't they take my arrows, they even fly all the way into the sky and hide over the clouds. Those kind of weak beings.

Even the Gorgons, if you create a barrier against petrification, their only weapon left would be their moving hair.

I really can't agree to sending only them to fight, and on top of that, it is a battlefield.

"Hmph… If Shiki says so, I will check it out some other time. But this time is a pretty serious attack from the demon race right? Also, there's the chance that the hero will see them as mamonos and attack them. I don't want that to happen" (Makoto)

"Hm… If you say so, it can't be helped. Thinking about the success rate and the demerits on our side, I thought it would be a good plan though" (Shiki)

"I don't want to simply abandon the hero, but we can't just straightforwardly go there. How troublesome. Uhm, hey Shiki, we were talking about the Kingdom all this time but, what about the Empire? If that's the true decoy, then there's not much need to worry about that side?" (Makoto)

I notice that we have only been talking about the Kingdom.

Right, there's two heroes.

“That’s the point I can’t see clearly yet. Honestly speaking, I don’t know. I do have something in mind, but I wonder if that’s actually correct” (Shiki)

“Can you tell me please?” (Makoto)

“For the demon race to do a two-sided attack, they still have too few fighting force. Moreover, the forces at the Empire are dispersed. I don’t feel like they are aiming for the capital at that side. But if the Empire discovers that the battle there is a decoy, the Empire’s hero has a dragon that is boasted for their high mobility, so he will most likely go there to provide support. The demons that haven’t brought down the Limia capital will be caught in a pincer attack by the Limia hero and the Empire hero. It seems the Empire’s hero is good against many enemies, so his power isn’t something they can ignore. The longer the fight prolongs, the chances the people stationed at Stella Fort for the attack will regroup with the capital, and not only will the demons have inferior numbers, they might even be wiped out. If that were to happen, everything will turn out as pointless” (Shiki)

“Yeah” (Makoto)

“So there should be a reason why they dispersed their forces at the Empire, but I don’t know the reason clearly yet. I am thinking that maybe the Dragon Slayer Waka-sama talked about before is slipped in one of the units heading to the Empire. If they were to use her to completely hold the hero back, I don’t know the reason for dispersing the forces, but I would understand how it would work to reinforce the plan to attack Limia. But the Dragon Slayer siding with the demon race is something that is not well known yet. If she were to fight in this kind of battle, the truth that she is a traitor will spread through the whole world. I wonder if that person would actually do something like that, is what I am mulling over right now” (Shiki)

“Sofia huh~ I don’t know about her at all. I have only met her once, so there’s no way I would know what she is thinking” (Makoto)

What we both have in common is that we have a superior dragon

accompanying us.

But her way of thinking is something I can't read.

"Depends on where Rona will be appearing huh. If it's in the Empire, the Empire will really be a decoy, and the dispersal of their forces is to draw out the Empire. Is one way of thinking, but…" (Shiki)

It seems like both the Kingdom and the Empire are in a pretty precarious situation.

Limia's side seems worse, so I think that something should be done.

They are fellow Japanese after all.

To think that something like this was happening in the world while we were moving in Rotsgard.

I feel like this matter will become big.

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"The miraculous move Makoto-kun did unawarely, the restoration of the thought transmission at that timing; I thought the hero killing plan of the demon race would progress perfectly, but it seems like it will be slightly stormy" (Root)

On a tower at the corner of the Academy, Root looks at Makoto and Shiki who are close to the gate.

Quite the eyesight.

Normally, it would be impossible to see them from that distance.

The most that someone with good eyes would be able to do is see those two as a speck.

At night, it would be even more difficult.

"With that one move, it would be like denying his connection with the demon race. On top of that, showing the power of the Kuzunoha

Company to the various countries, they are now seen as a threat. Well, they did obtain a big advantage which is to have everyone in Rotsgard like Kuzunoha Company" (Root)

If the timing were faster, or a bit slower, it would have been possible that it would turn harder for Kuzunoha Company to deny their connection with the demon race.

The actions of Tomoe also influenced, but the setting she created from the very beginning was a bit slow, is how Root saw it in his point of view.

Makoto's timing was good and it was at pinpoint. Not only that, it wasn't his own proposition but something an authority forcefully pushed onto him.

It was a timing that many people thought as something that wasn't his aim and intention.

A chance that even the person himself can't determine, a moment that he didn't even know would be coming.

It isn't something that can be aimed for.

It is something that can't be done unless you have been born in 'that kind' of star.

Root can't do anything but laugh.

But well, there was also another emotion mixed in aside from his irresistible urge to laugh.

"It is Makoto-kun after all. Even if he is below a star where he draws a jackpot from time to time, he perpetrates all those things. Even at this time, it even made me think that he drew a joker along with that ace" (Root)

That's right.

He had no basis, but Makoto is not lucky.

Root knows that well.

That's why Root doesn't think that Makoto just earned that unexpected achievement.

Ending in a fight with a superior dragon without aiming for it, encountering a calamity spider, unable to understand the words of the people he met, having a normal appearance and still be looked down for it; no matter where you see it, he was always involved in something.

Root thinks: he has 'that kind' of fate.

"Furthermore, he has changed all of those into pluses and has reached up to this point. This time, just what will you do next~!!" (Root)

Suddenly opening wide those eyes of enjoyment, he turns towards the empty sky.

"Impossible! You shouldn't be able to move yet! Woman, you also push yourself way too hard!!" (Root)

The expression of agitation and astonishment that Root was showing right now would surprise Makoto if he were to see it.

A rift appears in the clouds that have been covering the sky the whole day and a sunlight shines through it.

A golden light falls from the night sky.

A section of Rotsgard town was basked by a divine light that would make anyone that sees it unconsciously feel solemnity.

Chapter 151: The Goddess' circumstances, Makoto's obstinacy

"Waka-sama, it's Bug!!" (Shiki)

Shiki's agitated voice.

Those words were a signal.

This is one of the countermeasures we made since the time I was kidnapped by 'that person'.

The signal that denotes the interference of the Goddess.

Soon after Shiki's words…

A golden light stretched out from the night sky we were looking at.

A lingering curtain of light, a thin vertical light as if it were forcibly cutting the night.

It can be seen as beautiful and majestic, but for me it was a light that only brings disgust inside of me.

There's no mistake, it is her.

The moment I heard the signal, I reflexively began composing the aria.

Kidnapping countermeasure.

I wasn't expecting to use it in this moment though.

The image of the spell, the structure, was pretty simple.

Against the storm-like forced teleport, I drop down an anchor and endure it.

That's all it is.

Shiki who instantly came to my side, and I, were basked by that light.

When I looked up at it, I felt width in it and its range is quite vast.

It is enveloping the main gate of the Academy and even a part of its garden that's located pretty deep.

Maybe it identified us, the spot of the light was growing narrower, and at the same time, I felt a power as if trying to drag me up.

I felt pulling power.

In other words, I am resisting her power.

I feel slightly happy that I am able to go against the power of the Goddess.

Because I am able to feel that I have progressed since last time.

"What tremendous power. Waka-sama, are you okay?!" (Shiki)

"No problems yet. Tch, she should just give up quickly and disappear. Kugh, so long!" (Makoto)

The interference time is long.

I am able to resist it for now.

It is still possible to go against it, but just like Shiki said, it is still not over yet.

The longer it continues, the more the anchor I have created is being scraped off. In time, it will definitely disappear completely.

This is what's called a battle of attrition.

At the same time, I thought about attacking, but I didn't know

‘where’ she was, so I was unable to.

“… Waka-sama, a problem” (Shiki)

“What?!” (Makoto)

“This might gather the attention of the hyumans. They will most likely notice that this light originates from the Goddess. And the people that see us going against it would…” (Shiki)

!!

Crap.

This is the Academy’s main gate.

Even if there isn’t many people around, it doesn’t mean there’s none.

This is… bad.

“Ugh”

The power placed in the teleport gets stronger.

That Bug!

Her timing is god-like.

Is she a genius in harassment?!

“Waka-sama, this could nullify all of our efforts in these few days. There’s way too many inconveniences in having the Church label us as enemies of God. For now I have covered the surroundings in darkness, but I don’t know when it will be blown away by the power of a God” (Shiki)

Shiki is quite composed.

Here I am, totally against being played around by that Bug again though!

… Damn it.

Everyone did their best as members of the company.

I also did my best.

I think the situation was going well until now.

… Damn iiit!!

I didn't lose this battle because of our powers okay?

Just take me, you bastard.

Power leaves my body.

In terms of time, it was around 10 seconds.

My battle with the Goddess ended with me losing.

Fortunately, the ones who saw the light of the Goddess and came here the fastest, most likely have not recognized Shiki and I yet.

I was grateful of Shiki's advice from the bottom of my heart.

We were dragged up along with quite the amount of stone paving and ground at our surroundings, and were engulfed by the light.

"Thanks Shiki. If I was alone there, I would have definitely competed with her out of obstinacy. I am sorry for having you accompany me" (Makoto)

"I never expected a day would come where I would meet the Goddess. D-Don't mind it, this will be good experience" (Shiki)

Even if you tell me that with a pale face, it is totally unconvincing Shiki.

In the first place, I don't know if she will show her face.

I was even doubting that.

Soon after that exchange, Shiki and I were brought to that platinum space that I first saw when I came to this world.

I am grateful that earth and stone didn't fall on top of us.

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The place where I heard that person's, that Goddess' voice.

At that the time when I thought I would punch her once when I came back here, I thought I would be the one that would be stepping into her territory.

But remembering the sensation from just now, it seems my countermeasures were not enough.

… Really, it just doesn't go as I expect.

I am still far from the God realm huh.

Even if she is rotten, she is still a Goddess after all.

For some reason, memories of the time when I was dropped into the wasteland were popping up in my mind.

Fufufu.

Why… Why do I have to come here again by the convenience of that Bug?!

"Wa-Waka-sama?" (Shiki)

"….."

Shiki probably noticed my state, he timidly calls me.

But I silently take out the *uchine* from my pocket. <Weapon that can be used as a throwing weapon and as a dagger. Chapter 76>

It is originally bigger and something that can't be carried in one's pocket, but I asked them to be made one size smaller, so it can be used as a hidden weapon.

I unsheathe the scabbard that covers the blade, and hold the long string coming from the hilt in my hand.

I swing the uchine in the air.

Bending my body to half its size, I think of the uchine as a part of my body… and in one breath, I release it forward to one point.

“!!”

Shiki looks at the point where the uchine crashes into.

In the room partition we don’t know till how long and to where it reaches to, the uchine pierced a glittering wall that was several meters away from us and several cracks appeared.

Sadly, it seems there wasn’t enough power. In time, without making a noise, it fell.

The cracks stayed there for a while, but in the end, they disappeared.

Even if the Goddess is rotten, she is still a God huh.

I let my anger drive me for a moment and vented it onto the walls, but after witnessing one attack, I was able to calm down a bit.

It may be dangerous to deal with her right now.

I have a lot of thoughts about her, and I do think that I should be as calm as possible.

But… honestly, I have no self-confidence in maintaining my calm in front of the Bug.

“This is probably the domain of the Goddess. I have been here before” (Makoto)

Retrieving my uchine, I gave a late reply to Shiki.

“So it really is huh” (Shiki)

Shiki probably felt tense, he hangs his head down slightly.

Right, this time Shiki is here with me.

I feel a bit relieved.

Also, no matter where I am blown away in this world, I can still use thought transmission.

Even at the time when I was kidnapped to a battlefield, I didn't pass through this place, but in the end I was able to escape to Asora.

That's right.

There's no need to be as scared as last time.

I can't say that I will be able to surely defeat her, but I am getting closer to her.

"To be unable to react to it until it was so close, it was impossible to offset it with a counter. If I were on alert I might have been able to notice slightly faster. I am really sorry" (Shiki)

"No, it is fine to just properly do the countermeasure next time for sure. Shiki has also experienced the kidnapping experience, and the anchor was quite shaven off. I think that in the end it wouldn't have worked anyways, so don't mind it" (Makoto)

I respond to the words of Shiki that I can feel slight fear from.

Right after that, I received a thought transmission from Tomoe and Mio.

I told them to stay standby, action-ready, and cut the thought transmission.

While having them in standby at Asora, I leave substitutes at the Academy.

This is also one of the countermeasures.

I don't know how much of our actions the Goddess is aware of, so just in case, move with caution.

With this, my card called Shiki has been discovered by the Goddess for sure.

I faintly think that Tomoe and Mio are still safe.

Hah~ but still, this is a shock.

It is true that I thought my first countermeasure would work against the Goddess.

But I still don't know the details of the ring the demon race used, and the other party is still a God.

But but, the demon race was able to go against the Goddess, so I thought we would also be able to, you know?

Well, it is only one failure.

Let's just leave it as: we will manage next time.

I don't think the Goddess intents to instantly come kill us anyways.

"Y-Yes. But is it okay to be talking about this? If it's the domain of the Goddess, won't everything conversed here be transmitted to her?" (Shiki)

"Isn't that fine? Because you know, even if she hears about it, we will be opposing her in the end, and even this time she should understand that we were trying to do something" (Makoto)

In the first place, is she really that almighty?

I don't think she is as significant as Shiki thinks.

"… Waka-sama is pretty calm" (Shiki)

"I wonder why. Maybe I am just bored of this. I really am self-centered, probably can't say much to Jin. Also, if that woman appears in front of me, I might be able to punch her once you know. To the king of self-centeredness" (Makoto)

In her case it would be queen? Oh well, who cares.

That's how tired of this situation I am.

It is a surprisingly silent mental state.

“You really are making light of me now, Misumi”

“Oh, Goddess-sama, long time no see” (Makoto)

A presence appears.

A giant presence as if it existed in every part of this place.

I could tell that Shiki’s body was trembling.

Pinpointing her location is… not working.

“I ordered you to stay there for the rest of your life, and yet, you readily broke it. And on top of that, when I called you to let you help in the battlefield, you end up doing something absurd. You also acted violently in here a few moments ago, right? Do you understand your own standing?” (Bug)

Quite the big words for someone that kidnapped me.

Also, Tsukuyomi-sama approved my freedom.

Not a bug with the title of Goddess, but a God.

Absurd?

You suddenly made me fight with a Dragon Slayer, so I don’t think you have the right to say that.

Even if it wasn’t me, anyone would have escaped.

“Without any explanation of the situation, you suddenly had me fight with a scary person like the Dragon Slayer. Even if you are a God, isn’t that way too selfish?” (Makoto)

“… There’s no selfishness in the actions a God takes for the people. The ones being used should be trembling in happiness to receive that honor. ‘I have been given a trial’ is what they would say” (Bug)

“Surely you jest. It is sad that our way of thinking is completely different. And so, are we going to be blessed by your appearance this time?” (Makoto)

I receive her courteously.

Her every word is anger inducing.

Prejudice, no, in this case it would be first impressions.

It is quite the powerful thing.

That her presence can't be pinpointed like a diffused reflection is also pissing me off.

I am pissed at myself for being unable to pinpoint her.

"How dare you say that after that manner of speech. I don't have a shape to show the likes of you. Magic power and presence isolation; thanks to you learning something troublesome like that, I had trouble finding your location lately. A moment ago it looked like it got stronger for a second, but right now it is so dim that I can't tell if it's there or not. I ended up using the priests. To think that you were actually in Academy Town, you really entered pretty deep huh. Hm? The one with you is… a hyuman? No, that's not it. But his magic power is certainly that of a hyuman… but it is similar to Misumi, quite the diluted presence" (Bug)

"…"

An indication as if sounding out.

It seems she is interested in Shiki.

He was previously a hyuman, but in terms of magic power, he is a lich. Isn't his magic power that of an undead?

This woman really knows how to push my buttons.

It is mortifying that I don't know where she is. I can't grasp her presence.

Because I used [Sakai] to search for her location, my magic power leaked out, and it seems she firmly noticed that.

It looks like Shiki also can't grasp the location of the Goddess. How

troublesome.

Now that I think about it, the reason I came to this world, and all the trouble as well; there would be no problems if she didn't do all of those and just obediently made me a hero instead of doing stupid things.

Leaving aside that I ended up fighting the demon race like she wanted.

I wouldn't have been attacked by a supreme dragon in the wasteland, and I wouldn't have been called an unsightly man by the hyumans.

Even the business, I might not have done it.

"Well, that's fine. No matter if you are a demi-human or a Golem, it seems you don't hold a significant amount of power anyways. Now then, Misumi. I will be sending you to Limia, save the hero. Because of the surprise attack of the demon race, the situation isn't that good. Seriously, what impertinent fellows" (Bug)

"Goddess-sama should go then. No need to rely on an ugly person like me" (Makoto)

I respond to her filled with sarcasm.

Shiki has not said a single word since that woman arrived.

Maybe he lost his words because of his first meeting with a God.

A conversation with only the voice can be called a meeting?

And so, the surprise attack of the demon race.

To save the hero.

If I remember correctly, the last time was a fight close to the Limia capital, right?

The capital and Stella Fort are close so can't they just regroup?

The demon race's real objective is the Limia hero, from what Shiki judged.

The Goddess went as far as to try using me, so it seems there's no doubt the situation is quite the precarious one.

… The Empire's hero has not headed there to provide support right?

In other words, the chances that Shiki's reading was correct is pretty high.

"No need to tell me. If I could do it, I would have. Gods have their own God circumstances. Circumstances that someone like you doesn't have the qualifications to know. If it were limited interference it would be one thing, but do you think a God can just nonchalantly descend?" (Bug)

She asks me with a tone as if considering me an idiot from the bottom of her heart.

Like hell I would know!

You ask someone that has been raised in a world where one wouldn't even know if there's actually a God out there?!

"But last time even the demon race was able to block that interference of yours, you know?" (Makoto)

"I won't let that kind of thing happen twice. Hm, I don't have the time to talk with you. The only answer is justice. Go" (Bug)

Did the situation deteriorate?

The Goddess' voice faintly stopped, and her tone changed to a slightly faster one.

But to be teleported no questions asked, I decline.

Because in the end I would end up doing as she told, that's no fun.

Especially if I am following the words of this Goddess.

“Even if you do it, at the worst, I might turn to the demon race side, you know?” (Makoto)

Feeling her magic power in effect, I tell her my will with a loud voice.

I create an anchor again.

If it’s true that the Goddess can’t freely provide support for the heroes and interfere at her will in the battlefield, doesn’t that mean I can strike a deal here?

This is what I thought with my mind that was unexpectedly clear.

I don’t know if it will go as I expect, but the power of the Goddess begins to lessen.

“… Are you seriously saying that? You are, in outline, a person connected to hyumans. And the heroes are humans born in the same world as you, you know? To go to the demon race without saving them, there shouldn’t be a single reason for that. I am not so free as to accompany such stupid defiance” (Bug)

…

De-fiance?

Don’t mess around!!

“Ahahaha!! Isn’t there a reason?! It’s because I hate you! It’s because I don’t want to obey your will! How is that? Don’t you think I would totally get along with the demon race?!” (Makoto)

I remember the time when the Merchant Guild’s representative made a sudden change in attitude.

There’s a part of me that wants to see what kind of reaction the Goddess would make, but I unconsciously took an attitude like the representative and shouted with a loud voice. Maybe I should have gone all the way and used ‘ore’ to make it sound more violent? For some reason, saying ‘ore’ is strangely difficult. <Informal way of saying ‘I’>

I have been using ‘boku’ for a long time, so I feel like it won’t change in my lifetime.

Oh right, leaving that aside…

I don’t really mind if a deal is not made.

It isn’t like I don’t want to go to Limia to save the hero.

I do think that this was an act out of my quick temper. That thing about the deal was also just something that came to my mind and I haven’t decided what to do yet. There haven’t been many things that have gone well in this world when I run by myself and do something on my own.

I know that painfully well!

But!

The Goddess’ remarks haven’t changed at all since then, and that really pissed me.

Anger welled inside of me with no way to contain it.

Even my throat felt as if something was gathering, and I felt like I was acting according to my emotions.

“What a stupid childish temper. Denying the only God in this world, just what do you intend to do? You and the demon race, no, the residents in this whole world won’t be able to live without my divine protection” (Bug)

“Don’t make me laugh. I have been living for several years in that kind of world. Actually, the hyumans that are living clinging to God and mindlessly relying on it is what I can’t understand!” (Makoto)

Things like blessings or divine protection; the hyumans are just strange.

At least try to develop magic and techniques by yourselfs.

If you are boasting big words like being the only God, I think your

duty is to properly lead them to strive for other things aside from beauty. Only teaching them to pointlessly look down on the demi-humans.

“Putting your previous world in the same plane as other worlds is proof of your ignorance. In this world I am the rule. If you don’t intend to follow it, I am fine with erasing you here and now you know?” (Bug)

“Poorly made threat. If you were able to do that, you would have done that after that previous teleport incident. Because it seems I didn’t move like you wanted me to after all. You are not an absolute rule, you are lying. What God. You can’t even change this crooked world as you wish, a defective product!” (Makoto)

I have been thinking a lot about things regarding the Goddess.

That is, the fact that she used a method like human summonings to resolve her problems.

The current state of the world is also telling me that.

Even now, she is being bound by what she calls the rules of Gods and using me to go save the heroes.

Even I can tell that she is taking desperate measures.

“… I see. It seems bringing you here to this domain was too much of a service for someone like you. Without being able to see my figure, you will now…” (Bug)

Ugh…

I felt a chill run down my spine.

“Goddess-sama, the people from the meeting are saying that if you are going to make them wait any longer, they will enter by force!”

“!! Time and time! Just understand it already, I am saying that I don’t want to go to that meeting!” (Bug)

A different voice reverberates in the space. It seems to be in a

hurry.

I could feel the presence I felt from my back growing further away. I could tell that my emotions were calming down.

As if what was welling up was silently returning to my stomach.

…

Maybe I said too much?

Honestly, my anger was ignoring my reason and I was blurting out thoughtless words.

To stay composed with her, is still difficult for the current me.

That's how much I have been accumulating inside of me.

To only tell me the things to do and use me left and right, I really can't tolerate that.

I did think there was a reason why the Goddess didn't erase me but, maybe there's some sort of obstacle from the shadows?

Honestly, I don't know till how far I can fight against her right now.

I do want to try it. No, I wanted to try it.

Because she is the very cause for everything that's happening.

But when I returned to my senses, I saw the whole body of Shiki trembling.

He isn't trembling out of excitement. He is trembling because of fear.

I have exposed Shiki to quite the danger.

I still don't clearly know my winning percentage against the Goddess.

Shiki probably has some sort of indicator and that's why he is trembling.

In that case, that most likely means it is still not time yet.

Certainly, I still haven't thought of a way to bring out her real form yet.

It might be possible if I use all the output of [Sakai] for perception though.

"But this is from the original world's-"

"I understand! I will go right away! You return and calm them down–" (Bug)

"Kyaaa, KYAAAA!"

"Kugh, don't tell me, they are forcing their way?! That no-brain!" (Bug)

I felt slight gratefulness towards the subordinate of the Goddess that interrupted.

I was able to create a blank time for me.

Thinking time.

But sadly, that time was stopped by a scream that was totally not normal.

"Misumi! I now understand that you bear dissatisfaction towards me. Then let's make this the last time. From now on, as long as you don't show straightforward antagonism towards the hyumans, I won't interfere with you. How about that?" (Bug)

That… sounds kinda nice.

But this is a proposition of hers.

Even if I obediently accept it, my heart won't settle.

Even if I was probably about to be erased just a few moments ago, it doesn't mean my anger towards the Goddess has withered.

It may be too soon to fight her, but I still want to oppose her in

some way.

“That won’t be enough. By your demand, I am going to directly go save a hero I have no relations to, right?” (Makoto)

“… I see. So you were grumbling because you wanted a reward. Hmph, I don’t like that greed of you humans. Even my hyumans, I was unable to take out that part of them from the base of humans they were made of. Being a hyuman but living as a human, that’s quite the fitting avarice. Well, you are lucky. Your narrow escape from death just now was also lucky, but right now I don’t have the time to spare for negotiations. Say what you want, but say it right this instant” (Bug)

This instant?!

What should I ask for?

It is not like I was expecting it would happen.

Honestly speaking, I was just aiming to pester her.

If I am going to get something, what I currently need is…

The dwarfs make equipment already.

In terms of magic, I already have the comprehension this woman gave me, and in terms of amount, I probably have more magic power than the Goddess.

In that case, change this outward appearance?

Not even as a joke.

I have been living with this appearance since I have been born.

I don’t have a single intent to go so far as to ask this woman to become a beauty.

What to do?

What should I do?

“Time’s up. Without even deciding what you want and saying you want something, that’s literally the greed of a child” (Bug)

“… In that case, I want this person to receive the blessing of common language. We have been on alert of you, so we haven’t gone to a temple to ask”

A voice resounds from my side.

Shiki.

I see, language.

Being able to use common language would be convenient.

I have been so used to written communication that I didn’t think about it.

It even feels like a moderate wish and not an excessive one.

“I don’t remember allowing your speech, weakling. But… hmph, common language? You can’t speak?” (Bug)

“Yeah, because of your curse” (Makoto)

“I only excluded hyuman words from your ‘comprehension’. For you to be unable to speak even when studying it, your incompetence is lower than demi-humans, Misumi” (Bug)

“… Do you have the time to pick a fight, Goddess?” (Makoto)

Ah, amazing.

Even if I don’t consciously do it, harsh words just come out naturally.

I wonder how much I hate this woman.

Or maybe this is the backlash for trying to speak courteously with her in the beginning?

“You are missing the -sama. Just how far are you going to anger me. As expected of the child of the people that casted aside my

world. It's okay. Something like that, I can pay it to you in advance. Ara, it doesn't enter? How strange. Something like this, shouldn't be unable to enter" (Bug)

My body. Accurately speaking, my head.

I felt a strange sensation as if my brain was being grabbed by two hands and it's being fondled.

Is obtaining common language something this disgusting?!

"Gugh"

"It hurts? How strange. But it should be fine right? You were the one that wished for it, so if something happens because of it, it isn't my fault. Even if you die, properly understand that it is not my responsibility okay? This is something you wished for after all" (Bug)

The sensation gets stronger.

An eerie sensation as if my brain is being crumpled. A pain resembling migraine intermittently reverberates.

Ugh… what a terrible sensation.

I don't want to groan in front of this woman even if it kills me, so I just distort my expression and endure the pain.

I was stumped by a strong vomiting sensation.

"Hmph, done. Well then, you promised. An agreement between a human and a God, if you don't fulfill it, when that happens, prepare yourself. Push aside the danger approaching the hero, and let's see, while at it, bring down that Fort. If you can't, die. No, you will do it even if it kills you" (Bug)

"The contents are… the heroes' protection, and to bring down Stella Fort. These two points, no mistake right?" (Makoto)

I confirm the Goddess' deal.

Damn it, if with this I am still unable to speak common language, I will never forgive this woman.

“… Yeah, disappear at once! Ugh, they are already here. I will head there now…” (Bug)

A sudden floating sensation.

This is… the same as last time.

The presence of the Goddess radically grows further away along with her words.

Her way of saying anything she wants and not waiting for the other side’s response is basically still the same huh.

I even think it was close to a miracle that this negotiation was possible.

Maybe the guests of the original world, or whatever it is they were talking about, turned into a tailwind for me?

Please let the Bug have a bad time with those possible guests.

“Waka-sama, a nosebleed… and also, there’s blood coming out from your eyes” (Shiki)

I wipe below my nose and the corner of my eye.

Blood was thickly sticking to it.

“Eh, you are right. Damn it. She didn’t do anything excessive to my body right?” (Makoto)

It should be fine, right?

I have experienced nosebleeds before, but having blood coming out from my eyes, doesn’t that sound bad?

“Waka-sama, that is… as expected, a God. I didn’t feel like I could provide any fighting force there. But in a near future, I will definitely—!!” (Shiki)

It seems Shiki realized his own powerlessness towards the Goddess.

I wonder how Tomoe and Mio will feel after hearing the story from Shiki later.

I was slightly interested.

But Shiki's regret didn't continue till the end.

Shiki and I were covered in an external power.

An unpleasant sensation as if forcefully pushing something unto me.

And then, as experience dictates, we were falling probably from a high altitude, tasting a sensation as if being wrenched from our lower body.

"Oooh?!" (Shiki)

"Shiki, I am happy for that decision of yours. Let's both do our best" (Makoto)

"Waka-sama?! T-This is, just what in the world is?!" (Shiki)

"You know, this is my third time. I have already gotten used. I feel like I would be able to challenge all the scream-inducing attractions of any themepark. We are probably being sent straight to the Limia capital" (Makoto)

While the screaming Shiki clung to me, we pierce through the clouds while our vision spins. We were probably falling to the battlefield. I was pretty composed.

I think there's quite a bit of time before we drop.

The dropping control is definitely self-service, so there's probably the need to act in advance.

We are talking about that woman, so I probably can't expect she will do something similar to what Tsukuyomi-sama did last time.

Right, the Goddess should be busy right now, so maybe I should call

Tomoe and Mio.

… Wait.

Tomoe… and Mio.

If it's these two…

No, Shiki said it too.

That I should evaluate the residents of Asora higher.

In that case… yeah.

… Let's mobilize.

The world seems to be in chaos anyways.

(Tomoe, Mio) (Makoto)

I connect the thought transmission with those two.

It seems Shiki is still breathing deeply and in quite the chaotic state.

I should leave the orders to him for later.

(… You were safe, Waka. Was there any serious matter?) (Tomoe)

(That Goddess! What did that Goddess do to you, Waka-sama?! Are you hurt anywhere?!) (Mio)

(I am okay, both of you. Shiki felt her in a sense, so you can ask him for reference later. And so, I have something I want to ask both of you) (Makoto)

(Of course. No matter the place, we will be there. Where are you right now?) (Tomoe)

(Leave it to me!! I will immediately be by your side~) (Mio)

(I am probably in the sky of the Limia capital. But you both don't need to come) (Makoto)

(?!!)

(Eh?!)

Tomoe and Mio are surprised by my words.

Hm, what should I do?

The winged-kin and the Gorgons still leave me uneasy.

In that case…

(Tomoe, Mio, at this side Shiki and I will be fine. That's why, you guys, and also the Highland Orcs and Mist Lizards, if there are people that want to, let those people in as well) (Makoto)

I stop my words for a moment.

Tomoe probably understood what I am trying to say. Emotions that can't be turned into words were mixed, and I could even tell the atmosphere over at that side.

(Seize Kaleneon) (Makoto)

I can't give detailed instructions.

Because I don't know much about the place itself.

That's why, after saying that, I added a few rough instructions, and leave Tomoe and Mio in Shiki's hands.

I cut the thought transmission and breath in deeply.

Well then, now…

Strangely, as the battlefield gets ever closer, I could tell that my head grew clearer and colder.

In the end it is just me, but these kind of things excite me.

It feels as if I have broken from a shell and have changed.

"Shiki, I will control the dropping, so can you please envelop us in

darkness to hide our figures?" (Makoto)

"U-Understood. I will try" (Shiki)

"After that…" (Makoto)

I was able to confirm a big town blazing up.

We barely made it in time.

It is a distance where I can tell that it isn't the moonlight that is lighting up the night, but the light of a town burning up.

The figures of Shiki and I followed the trail of golden light, and we were enveloped by a ball of darkness, plunging directly into the Limia capital.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

"… Hey, Mio" (Tomoe)

"……"

"Makes you boil, right?" (Tomoe)

"… Yeah, to the point of trembling" (Mio)

Without looking at each other, Tomoe and Mio who were in Asora, face their front with their eyes closed.

The Goddess' interference. Their master's second kidnapping.

The two of them had several things they wanted to tell Shiki who was with Makoto, but receiving a shock from the words of Makoto, they forgot about such a trivial thing.

It was an order that made them feel a change in Makoto's mentality.

"With this, the four seasons will arrive in Asora-desu wa ne? You must be happy, Tomoe-san" (Mio)

"Fufu, you are stating the obvious, Mio. 'Something like that'

doesn't matter right now" (Tomoe)

Tomoe was trembling with a joy that controlled her body, and while her morale increased without any signs of stopping, her mouth slants.

The four seasons she wished for.

And yet, she called that wish of hers 'something like that'.

"This is the first time-ja. The first time Waka himself has ordered us to fight for his sake, to head to the battlefield. I see, so this is how it feels-ja na… Waka wishes for Kaleneon, and has ordered us to obtain it. Kukukuku!!!" (Tomoe)

"Seriously… I am of course happy to move for that person's sake, but to be relied upon in this way and have him leave things to us, I didn't know it would feel so good" (Mio)

What's important for these girls is the reality that Makoto has given them a spontaneous order.

Until now, Makoto has asked them for many things, and has also ordered them as well.

But at those times, instead of calling them something Makoto purely wanted, they were all things that had some other intention in mind.

Even Kaleneon was information he received from the librarian Eva who worked at Rotsgard Academy.

But this region was related to Makoto's parents, so he held strong interest in it.

He thought a lot about it himself, and he reached the conclusion that he 'wished' for it.

Tomoe and Mio's master, Misumi Makoto, said that he wanted it. They would obtain it by his orders and present it to him.

They will grant their master's self-interest.

That made them unbearably happy.

“He said that: ‘For starters, it is fine with just the place I pointed out’, but… you understand right, Mio?” (Tomoe)

“Of course. The whole region, the demon race, and also all implicated party will disappear-desu wa” (Mio)

“Umu, I would want to go right this instant and rampage-ja ga. But it seems Waka has also acknowledged the races that reside in Asora-ja. We have to share this joy with them as well. As the servants of Waka living in the same Asora” (Tomoe)

“… Yeah. The lizards and the orcs, was it?” (Mio)

Makoto has given them the minimum instructions.

‘The place Tomoe pointed out in a map last time, the area where the territory of Kaleneon once was, obtain that area’ is what he ordered.

And regarding that, he didn’t just assign Tomoe and Mio, but that he wouldn’t mind letting in the Highland Orcs and Mist Lizards that want to participate.

For Makoto who only saw the demi-humans and mamonos living in Asora as targets of protection and friends, those were words that one would not expect from him.

But he really did say it.

He said ‘the ones who wanted to participate’, but Tomoe and Mio were sure that as soon as they tell them the story, not only the unit that was staying in standby in case they were called to Rotsgard, even the other ones will arm themselves and will want to participate.

Actually, Tomoe felt that the lizards, who were called to Rotsgard, were the ones that pulled the least appealing task.

The two already passed through the whole residence of Makoto and were leaving with the troops that were inside the mansion. They

were telling the circumstances to every race.

Tomoe headed to the residential lands of the Lizards; Mio headed to the residential lands of the Orcs. After a slight difference in time, a roar occurs.

A war cry of happiness.

Tomoe and Mio nod in satisfaction, and tell the warriors about Makoto's words and objective with a meek countenance.

"Waka is also fighting in another place. Listen here, we will present Waka with a perfect victory" (Tomoe)

"The days you have passed training in Asora, Waka-sama has acknowledged it. It is unforgivable to betray any of those two. Face the challenge with your all" (Mio)

The words of the chiefs, Tomoe and Mio, resonated silently.

And at the same time, a giant mist gate that's rarely seen in Asora appeared.

There were no words for this moment.

Following the two that were walking, the mixed units of Lizards and Orcs silently cross the gate and disappear.

Maybe they didn't want the fire inside of them leaking out even if for one bit, they kept their mouth shut and were deliberately accumulating it for that instant when it explodes.

At this day, Asora approaches their first campaign.

Chapter 152: Participation of the devil ①

“This is not the time to be saying: ‘Tiring’, right?”

Mio placed her right hand to the front.

Without putting much power in it, she pictured a releasing image and fires it, not from her hand, but from her sleeve.

With her as the center, an invisible magic power expands at high speed.

If someone were able to see it, they would all say that it looked like several spider webs piled one over the other.

After Mio obtained her humanoid body, she learned this spell to cover for her weak point which was her perception ability.

“I am counting on you, Mio” (Tomoe)

“Yeah, look forward to it. Here I go-desu wa” (Mio)

Kaleneon.

The place where there was a small hyuman country in the past.

Right now, the people that obey Misumi Makoto, no, the representative of Kuzunoha Company, Raidou, were standing at this land.

Tomoe and Mio were at the lead, and the mamonos were lined up.

The Highland Orcs and Mist Lizards that lived in the wasteland.

With a total number that doesn’t even reach the hundreds, they were all completely armed, and when the moonlight shines

sometimes, their equipment reflects the light.

As if acting in concert to Mio's words, they raised their voices with an: "Oooh!!"

"Web radar and joint link huh. Truly a convenient spell-ja. I can grasp the surroundings as if I were touching it" (Tomoe)

Tomoe's words sounded satisfied.

It was at the moment Mio linked the perception area with the others.

Its range is around 20 km.

Thinking about the area of this time's plan, this range was plenty enough.

In essence, her perception area is actually wider, but it seems she judged that it was pointless to link all that area.

She linked all the area with Tomoe, but she limited the area the Orcs and Mist Lizards received to the space of the strategy.

Tomoe said it was like a radar, and it is quite the accurate depiction.

Right now in the units that have come here from Asora, every one of them has a radar manifesting inside their heads.

They still haven't made contact, and yet, they completely knew how many enemies there were in the location, and just how their forces were distributed.

"Well then, this is a night raid. I wonder how much they will struggle" (Mio)

"This time, a declaration of war is unnecessary. Because it has 'already been done' after all. In this occasion, Waka's intentions will be achieved" (Tomoe)

"Yeah, I can't hold back any longer. I will be heading out, excuse

me” (Mio)

“Ah, Mio?! Can’t be helped huh. I totally feel the same way after all. You guys, I don’t know if I will be able to hold back tonight. Mio will be in charge of the Fortress’ inner part. In that case, I will go secure the gate of Asora. Don’t get close to us for a while” (Tomoe)

When Mio did one step forward, her figure disappears.

Tomoe confirms the place she is heading to and makes a smile. Then, she turns towards the units.

To the words and expression filled with fighting spirit that can’t normally be seen in Tomoe, the Orcs and Lizards silently nod.

While showing an unconcealable fire in their eyes.

“Everyone must be feeling the same. Highland Orcs and Mist Lizards, rampage to your heart’s content. It is okay to not pursue the ones escaping. You understand, right? In context, this a war between Kaleneon and the demon race-ja” (Tomoe)

Cutting her words, Tomoe inhales.

Thrusting her unsheathed katana to the sky, she gathers everyone’s will.

“A war dedicated to Waka-ja! Everyone that opposes! Completely! Trample them down!!” (Tomoe)

As soon as she finishes her speech, Tomoe kicks the ground, and in the moment she reaches mid-air, she was enveloped by mist and disappeared.

Immediately following that, a war cry resonated in the whole region.

With excess vigor, a blaze of many colors shine in the sky.

This is the deed of the Mist Lizards.

This was the beginning of the war, no, of the genocide.

With a force that can't be called a big army at all, they shouted a thunderous roar that made the ground tremble as they march.

Their aim is a part of a town that has been repaired and utilized as a fortress. The stronghold that pertains Kaleneon.

From what Tomoe investigated, there are around two thousand demons stationed in that place.

They are not tempered enough to be in the frontlines, but as an army, they are a force in a level plenty enough to stand in battle.

They were distracted by Mio who had already begun rampaging, but when they noticed the group of mixed mamonos, with a reaction slightly slower than usual, they began preparing.

At nigh time the gate was already closed, and they apply a defensive enhance to it. Immediately after, the archer and magician units position themselves at the outer walls and grasp the position of the enemy.

They commence their attack on them.

Their moves were not bad.

If taking into consideration that Mio is rampaging within, it can be considered a reaction speed worthy of praise.

However…

Their enemy was too much.

What they are currently facing are crazy fellows that have been living in the world's border as if it were only natural, moreover, they have been trained by a Supreme Dragon, the Black Calamity Spider, and also demi-humans. Of course, the defense unit has no way of knowing this.

They in itself are formidable enemies, and yet, right now their morale is at their climax.

It isn't something they can deal with.

Actually, if they were to teleport with the help of Tomoe or Mio, they would have been able to fight from the inside as well.

But the Orcs and Lizards wished to fight right from the front.

Everything was for the sake of showing their power to this distant land, about the power of their Lord.

For them, Kaleneon is an offering.

The arrows and spells that were fired towards them were all thwarted.

Not even a rock could reach.

–Something is wrong.

By the time the defense unit noticed the strangeness of the situation, it was already too late.

The attackers moved.

“GO!!”

“Ooooh!”

A large-builded Orc roars with a giant mace in hand.

Being ordered by the delicate-looking magician female orc, the Giant Orc kicks the ground.

That body radiated a red luminescence, and as if being pushed forward, he soared the sky.

The one who valiantly ordered this, was Ema.

She was currently showing the face of a warrior, something that no one would be able to imagine from the girl that normally does deskwork.

Applying a specially dense enhancing magic to the warrior that plunged in, she again blocks the attacks from the outer walls.

“How is the fortification of the defensive wall?!”

“Sufficient! After placing another layer, we will soon be able to shift to defense”

“Good. First we will begin by crushing those Orcs!”

The charge of an Orc that was in the units.

Understanding the reason why he was trying to plunge onto the gate, the demons immediately react.

“Ooooh!! Like hell they will stop me!!”

Drawing a parabola, the Highland Orc suddenly draws closer to the gate.

Holding the mace that looks giant even when in the hands of the big-builded orc, he brandishes it.

Without showing any signs of breaking his stance, he smashes that one attack onto the gates.

A specially loud sound, as if a lightning fell, resounded in the Fortress at night.

In the smoke that ascends, a big shadow rises.

Smoke was rising from the Orc’s body as well.

The solid gate protecting the fortress was already turned into a miserable wreckage.

They most likely thought that it would be best to attack the Orc while his vision was still not clear. Several shadows commence their attack.

It seems several lights from inside the fortress served as illumination.

The result was a tragedy.

The mace was quickly swung horizontally.

All the shadows were thrown to the opposite direction with good momentum.

“Don’t underestimate the pigs of the wasteland. Don’t lower your guard, do your best. There are plenty behind me that are a lot stronger than me! If you guys are weak, we can’t show our best you know!”

“On my lead!!”

“Don’t let them have their way! To let this no-names do any further than this–!!”

“They are just Orcs and Lizardmen. On top of that, there’s not even a hundred of them!!”

The troops of Asora flood into the fortress.

It doesn’t even reach the hundreds.

That’s exactly right.

Normally, Orcs and Lizardmen are not that much of a high standing among the demon race army.

That’s exactly right.

In the lands that are under the rule of the demon race, no one would imagine that strong troops originating from the wasteland would be attacking them.

Therefore…

Their utmost resistance was being trampled down.

The morale that the people of Asora emit hasn’t shown any signs of weakening.

The two thousand soldiers protecting the fortress were being challenged by an enemy of less than a hundred, moreover, they are dispersed.

Because of Mio's favour, the Lizardmen that are able to accurately grasp the enemy's' position and situation, divided in groups of 3, which is the smallest configuration they have, and were tearing down their foes.

It was nothing other than reckless.

If Makoto were to give an impression of this fight, it would be that this is a battle that disregards strategy.

It's a difference in number of troops that normally wouldn't even be able to break down the gate.

But even so…

The fortress' gate was opened, and the warrior that opened it, taunted the two thousand that were there.

All the troops of Asora understood the situation of the battle.

They knew that Mio had already arrived at a place that has a big reaction, and Tomoe is heading to her target location at an incredible speed.

Every single one of them led the way and placed strength in their fists.

For the demon race, this nightmare-like fight had just begun.

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"Ara, I am sorry for Tomoe-san but, it seems I drew a winner-desu wa" (Mio)

"… If I asked who are you, woman, would you answer?"

"Of course. My name is Mio. And you?" (Mio)

"… I am one of the soldiers under the rule of Demon Lord-sama. Is there any need to know more?"

"If I don't know your name, I won't be able to report who I did

what to. It would be troublesome” (Mio)

Mio pleasantly laughs while responding the man.

In the inside of the fortress, at a space where it was most likely used as a big meeting room.

At this place, she met what the bunch at this place would call: ‘the strongest amongst them’.

His upper half is close to that of a hyuman, but his lower half is that of a serpent.

He had presence, and power can he sensed from him as well.

Wanting to defeat the biggest game to report to her master Makoto, in Mio’s eyes he was the most suitable game.

“This one’s name is Reft. A variant dragon, Mildi Dragon Reft”

“Ara, a mutation of the dragon race. How rare. I thought you were a snake” (Mio)

“You said your name was Mio, right? Without even a declaration of war, just what in the world are you bastards? A force that commands Orcs and Lizards. I can’t think of it as a hyuman army”

“Ufufufu” (Mio)

Mio was truly in a good mood.

So happy, so happy, so ever happy.

Even when she understands that she is in the battlefield, she can’t stop her face from smiling widely.

“So you don’t even intend to answer huh. Sorry but, that I was here was unlucky of you guys. I will have to crush you—”

“No, I will offer you the answer-desu wa” (Mio)

“?!!”

“We have already finished declaring war. No, you guys were the ones who declared war upon us, you know?” (Mio)

“… What?”

“We are Kaleneon. The ones that should leave this country are you demon race-desu wa” (Mio)

“Kale-neon, you say? The hyuman country that was here before? Are you saying you guys are an army from a ruined country?”

“No. Kaleneon has not fallen. It has always been here” (Mio)

“… Are you crazy?”

Reft made a dubious face at Mio’s entranced way of talking.

From his point of view it was natural, since Mio was acting as if she were under the effects of a drug.

“Fufufu. ‘That’ will become the truth, from now on. By our hands” (Mio)

Mio continued without changing her behavior and way of speaking.

Even if it wasn’t Reft, anyone would have felt madness from it.

“All the land until Stella Fort, is land under our control. This Kaleneon is also one of the lands the demon race possesses! I am not free enough to accompany you in your nonsense!”

“… That’s why it is convenient-desu yo. Hyumans won’t believe much of what you guys say after all. Even if one obscure country wasn’t destroyed… no one would be able to deny it. If the country in itself was truly there, that is” (Mio)

“Wh-at?”

“–Is what she said. Honestly, I don’t understand well myself. I actually don’t care about those kind of matters. I will deal with you, and offer this land to Waka-sama. That is the only most important thing. No matter if this place was Kaleneon, or a place that

continued being Kaleneon; I don't care whichever one it is-desu wa" (Mio)

"You… you guys, just what are you…"

'Let's begin', is what Mio says as she holds her folding fan and points it at Reft.

"It seems like I can't simply kill you. Because I still have things I have to ask you"

Reft turns his giant spear at Mio.

His half-hyuman, half-snake body twists.

"If you are able to win against me, do as you wish. Ufufu, the gate has been broken huh. It seems like they are also doing their best to offer victory to Waka-sama. Of course, today, in this very day, there's not a single one in our forces that are unable to do that though" (Mio)

"This pressure is… not something a simple lunatic group is able to exude. To think that I would have to do this kind of battle before meeting the hero"

The variant dragon, Reft.

One of the demon generals that was at this fortress by chance.

An upper echelon of the demon race.

While receiving the blood thirst with her body, Mio narrowed her eyes and laughed.

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"I see"

Outskirts of the imperial capital.

The woman that had obtained several amounts of data, crumpled that paper into a ball and threw it onto the table.

Blue skin and no horn.

Wearing a tight suit, she has an exaggerated coat on her shoulders.

One of the demon generals, Rona.

Even if she is in the outskirts, she is still inside the imperial capital.

The exaggerated coat is something that is only provided to demons in the upper echelons.

To wear that in the capital of hyumans is pretty dangerous.

Even so, Rona paid it no mind, and with no impatience, she stayed sitting in the room.

“Good work. I have no right to say this but you know, Rona, you are pretty daring”

“Sofia. I don’t mind you rampaging as you wish you know? With your power, you should be able to stir trouble even without encountering the hero after all. Also, you easily slaughtered the so called treasured corps of the Empire, right? Keep going that way” (Rona)

Rona glances at Sofia and the boy that entered the room along with her, and then turns her eyes towards her documents again.

“They showed no resistance. I came to hear Rona’s: ‘I see’. I was interested in the reason for this weird dispersed attack which I don’t know if you even have the intention to attack or not” (Sofia)

“Isn’t there plenty enough casualties appearing from the Empire’s army? We have sufficient intent to attack. Don’t worry about it. Also, Sofia, and Lancer as well. Isn’t it bad to show yourselves in the imperial capital? The unit here is being pushed back, so I would be grateful if you provided backing though” (Rona)

“At the beginning that’s how we did it. Using a unit that seemed to be close to wipe out as bait, we get them in a pincer attack and crush them. I thought this was that kind of strategy. But that’s not it, right? Rona has thrown away quite the amount of units before.

We are not subordinates but collaborators, so I would like you to share information you know~" (Sofia)

"… Fuh~ The strategy huh. Well, for the time being, you two are under my care. If you are collaborators, cooperate in making the strategy proceed smoothly" (Rona)

"So she says, Mitsurugi" (Sofia)

"Words that chip away my motivation. To hear those kind of words from the person in charge itself makes it even more so" (Lancer)

The faces of Sofia and Lancer were showing clear dissatisfaction as they look at Rona.

The female gestures and that playful behavior Rona used when she was confronting Makoto, were nowhere to be found.

With cold eyes and a strict expression, she organized the information that came up and was looking at the situation of the war, but she temporarily stopped reading the documents.

Maintaining her face as a commander, she looks at the two collaborators.

"The Empire's hero has a two-sided nature. At times he will become aggressive, and at others he will show caution. And those two sides are switching no matter what type of plan we use. I thought that it would be best to understand the reason of this, since I felt that this would prove beneficial later on. So I have been concentrating the investigation mainly on this point. Other than that, I wanted to know the strength of the cherished force the Empire was raising. In that point, you two easily brought them out and, even if it was only one corp, you wiped them out. You were a great help. Thanks to you both, I think I will be able to make some countermeasures. How is that, is this enough? Let me tell you this, you owe me one with this, okay?" (Rona)

"I see~. Open as many drawers from the Empire as possible, is what you are trying to say. Hmph, well well. That corp wasn't a big deal anyways. Even if it wasn't me, things would have managed

somehow. They were unbalanced and left a lot of openings after all" (Sofia)

"I was worried that the adventurer system would interfere, but there were no problems. Now that I fish out and see, this is indeed one of the special traits of a hero. It may have been troublesome if this were to reach the ears of the Kingdom, but fortunately, they hold no proof. At that side Io is going at it seriously, so they are done for anyways" (Rona)

"It seems that girl's party has broken free of the level restrain. It was eerie to see high leveled soldiers being mass produced, but even if their levels are high~" (Sofia)

"Rona, if you say we owe you, you should talk about that two-sided nature of the hero you speak of, right? Don't worry, I have a proper collateral prepared already" (Lancer)

"… How unpleasant" (Rona)

Rona looks at the boy with heartfelt unpleasantness.

Both of them don't even differentiate the things that can and can't be said.

It's not that they pursue without knowing. They pursue while knowing.

An extraordinarily bad personality there.

It is also because Rona doesn't trust them at all.

Even if she has to admit their skills, she can't trust her back to them.

As long as she can't be sure that their interests match, she didn't want to make them participate in important strategies, is how she truly felt.

That's why, instead of having them participate in the Limia capital plan, she had both of them act at the Empire where Rona herself can keep a check in their actions.

“The Empire’s hero, Iwahashi Tomoki, is a hero that is equipped with anti-army equipment. Maneuverability of a flying dragon, defensive power of a royal guard, a golem-user alchemist; the type that uses diversions and boosts in several aspects to avoid the opponent from drawing closer. It may look like force-pushing, but he actually thinks relatively well” (Rona)

“I don’t care about such a regular assessment though” (Lancer)

“… Got it. What we understood from this time’s strategy was the peculiarity of this switch of his. He is probably changing his fighting depending if it’s day or night, in a more specific way, the lunar phase. Probably the time of the moon. Just in the nights, he gains some sort of strong healing power, is what I think” (Rona)

“A healing power that only activates at night?” (Lancer)

“Yeah, I have heard of no such thing though. I don’t think there’s a mistake there. That’s why, if we are going to corner him, it would be best if it were at noon. I think it would be best to continue the strategy by avoiding the nights or letting them pass” (Rona)

“… In other words, he is stronger at night, right?” (Sofia)

“That’s the conclusion, yeah. It is clear that he is using high powered skills and making bolder moves mostly at night. Lancer, what is the collateral?” (Rona)

“Oh, right. Princess Lily is returning. Accurately speaking, she has already begun giving orders from several towns away of the town of Robin she was in” (Lancer)

“?!! Are you speaking the truth?!” (Rona)

“Of course. This is certain” (Lancer)

“… Tch, so she is already moving. It depends on what happened to Rotsgard though. If that woman has returned, it is unnecessary to stay here for long. We have already achieved our objective anyways. After this, it would be enough to just go from the back huh. A step faster towards Stella” (Rona)

Nervousness appeared in Rona's face.

It was information that changed the situation of the war greatly.

It was definitely information that she couldn't speak of even if negotiated.

'As I thought, I can't trust these two', is what Rona reaffirmed.

Just like what the saying says 'Can't see the forest for the trees', Rona was giving orders inside the capital itself.

She swiftly burned the documents and headed to the entrance of the room.

"… What are both of you doing? We are returning" (Rona)

"Fufu, I have received good information. With this, the return is just not enough right, Mitsurugi?" (Sofia)

"Sofia, people like you are just…" (Lancer)

Rona tilts her head at both Sofia and Lancer who she thought would be accompanying her, but were not showing signs of moving.

"Rona, I will give you a bit of service. You should cross the river and go to the safe sphere. I will… go play with the hero for a bit" (Sofia)

"?! Lady, were you listening to what I said?! At nights we don't know his strength accurately, you know?! Even if we seal his powers with the ring, he is currently only using weapons that are suited for him, so it doesn't have much effect. In the past we would have been able to crush him with just this much, but in the current state…" (Rona)

"I will leave the thought transmission open, so shut up. If you go as far as saying all this, I won't be able to stop anymore. I wonder if every person that has connections with the Goddess ends up like 'that person'. I am looking forward to it" (Sofia)

Sofia was emitting a blood thirst from her whole body which she

wasn’t even trying to hide.

In the latter half, she muttered as if talking to herself and felt like it wasn’t for anyone to hear.

Just who is ‘that person’?

There’s only one other person that knows this.

After Lancer makes a small sigh, he disappears along with Sofia.

“Hey, wait— Just how difficult they are to deal with! But if Princess Lily is returning, staying here would be dangerous. No choice but to return huh. If she were to just die off, the variables would decrease” (Rona)

Without chasing after the two, Rona leaves the building.

She is not disguising herself. She was in her natural demon form.

She must have judged that it was unnecessary to do so.

Without turning back, she blows up the building that was there and activates the previously set-up teleportal, escaping to the outsides of the capital.

Chapter 153: Participation of the Devil ②

“Fufu, it’s that huh. How valliant is the Empire’s hero-sama” (Sofia)

“Those are flashy attacks, but the firepower is also plenty good. It seems the information was correct that he gets quite stronger when night comes. Sofia, don’t underestimate him” (Lancer)

“There’s no way I would underestimate him right? I will think of this as practice for the time I kill the Devil. I am going to be doing this without holding back. That’s only if he is worthy of me doing so, that is” (Sofia)

“The Devil huh. That’s true. With this atmosphere, it wouldn’t be strange for that guy to appear. The current you might not get caught off guard, but no doubt he is still a formidable enemy” (Lancer)

“That’s how it is. Then, let’s do this!” (Sofia)

Sofia unsheathes the sword at her waist.

This is a different sword from the one she used to fight Makoto with.

The tinge and material properties of the sword blade share the same traits, but the great sword has been changed for a one handed sword, and a thin one at that.

Of course, Sofia was holding the sword with both hands.

Those eyes already seized the figure of the hero and his party that were flying around the battlefield faraway on their dragon.

“Good grief” (Lancer)

The superior dragon in the appearance of a boy, Lancer, cracks his fingers.

As if acting in concert to his nonchalant gesture, several shining swords appear in the sky.

It also appeared at the hero's surroundings, and the movements of the flying dragon grow duller.

Even if it was far away, for Sofia, this is practically the same as saying there's no distance at all.

A ferocious smile appears on Sofia's face.

Lifting Lancer with her free hand, the two of them disappear.

"Ara, that kid noticed me" (Sofia)

"… He probably has a tool to search for enemies. I have heard that there's ancient tools with outstanding perception power. More importantly, this one is still your partner even if provisionally, you know? Stop carrying me as if you were pinching a cat" (Lancer)

Slightly at the front of the flying dragon, the Dragon Slayer combi that appeared above ground were surprised that the Empire's hero noticed their presence.

It may be sparse, but it is still a place where battle is unfolding.

To notice someone that has suddenly appeared in an instant, isn't something ordinary.

The two that were able to perceive the hero's state were also abnormal, but those girls didn't seem to mind it.

The number of swords surrounding the flying dragon increased in a second.

It goes without saying, it is to confine them.

The confusion of the Empire's hero, Iwahashi Tomoki, and his party; Sofia didn't let it slip by.

With a spell that they couldn't tell just how strong it was or who placed it, their mobility was killed temporarily.

Ton

"Good evening, Empire's hero-sama" (Sofia)

"?! Who are you?!"

Sofia drops onto the back of the flying dragon.

Her movement was done by changing her position with a light sword, but for Tomoki who doesn't know that power of hers, he could only see her as someone suddenly falling from the sky.

Tomoki is equipped throughout his whole body and, leaving aside his own moving ability, his appearance was one that left no doubts for his high defensive power.

"Sofia. Dragon Slayer Sofia. Have you not heard of me?" (Sofia)

"Dragon Slayer… Dragon Slayer you say?! That Sofia?!" (Tomoki)

"I am happy. For the hero-sama to know my name. You are the Empire's hero, Iwahashi Tomoki, right?" (Sofia)

"Y-Yeah. What do you need so suddenly? Did you hear about the danger the Empire is facing and came to help me?" (Tomoki)

"This degree cannot be called danger for the Empire, right?" (Sofia)

After Sofia laughed away the words of Tomoki, she returns with a question herself.

"Well, even if Lily is not here, I am. This degree of attack from the demon race won't defeat us" (Tomoki)

"How valliant. It seems I can expect something from this, maybe" (Sofia)

"But then, just why did you come to the Empire? I have heard that you wander here and there, and even if someone thinks about

meeting you, they can't find you" (Tomoki)

The name of Dragon Slayer Sofia is well known, but since she doesn't show her face in the guild much, there were many times where people that want to meet Sofia, just can't.

Not only that, she doesn't cooperate much with the Guild's calls, and there's rumors saying that maybe her relationship with the Guild isn't that good.

That's why even the hero Tomoki hasn't met her before.

A woman, and strong.

She fulfills these two requisites, so for Tomoki, it is a person he would like to meet once and ask for her cooperation.

Of course, that cooperation will be by using his charm powers, but since he possesses a method that makes them unable to betray him, there's no reason to not use it.

"I was interested in you" (Sofia)

"In me? That… makes me happy. Then I invite you to the castle. Let's talk plenty" (Tomoki)

"Fufu, I don't care about your charm or anything like that. What I am interested in is…" (Sofia)

"Tomoki-sama!! Look out!!"

"Wa?!" (Tomoki)

The royal guard Ginebia, who was at the proximity of Tomoki, was paying attention to every action of Sofia, and places herself to the front of Tomoki.

A high-pitched sound of metal clashing reverberated on the back of the flying dragon.

"Quite the reaction there. Tomoki is a minus, but you knight lady, I give you a plus evaluation. That's right, this scent. You have

obtained the power of the dragon, right? The “Sand Wave Sazanami” huh” (Sofia)

“What are you playing here, Sofia? Pointing your sword at the hero Tomoki-sama. I don’t think you are a person that doesn’t understand the meaning of this action” (Ginebia)

Tomoki has his eyes wide open in surprise.

Aside from the two clashing their swords, Ginebia and Sofia, there’s also the dragon summoner, Mora; and the alchemist user Yukinatsu. Both of them had their body stiffened.

Because they have understood that the person that has appeared so close to them is an enemy.

“Of course I understand. Right, I forgot to mention this. Currently, I also have another title. Demon race vice-general Sofia Blue. Nice to meet you, hero-sama party” (Sofia)

“?!”

“Wa?!”

“A demon race!”

“Vice-general?!”

“I heard about hero-sama’s reputation of being strong at night, so I thought I would like you to dance one song with us. How about it? The moon is beautiful this night, you know?” (Sofia)

Sofia jokingly does one bow.

Even though she is in a situation where she is technically surrounded by enemies, she doesn’t show any signs of tension.

“… No matter who you are!!”

Tomoki increases the strength of his charm power.

There’s only few people that this power hasn’t worked on.

On top of that, maybe because he has gotten used to utilizing it, its power has steadily increased.

Not only that.

He has been secretly training it himself for the sake of it working against the Kingdom's hero and the Priestess. Right now, he would be able to even bring down an unprepared demon race with a glance.

But…

"That's not good, hero-sama. That doesn't work on me. If you want to charm me, you have to be able to charm a Superior Dragon in an instant. But you know, hero-sama~, there's a much simpler way" (Sofia)

"You… you know about the charm eyes?" (Tomoki)

"Such an outside tactic is useless. Hey, try winning against me. If you are able to do that, I will become yours. Even without those eyes, I will offer you my mind and body" (Sofia)

Turning the tables on Tomoki's charm, Sofia emphasizes her breasts and thighs with a pose, and provokes him.

"Your level is still higher than mine, but I will teach you that a fight isn't decided only by that!" (Tomoki)

"I am totally of the same opinion. Then first of all, this lizard is in the way" (Sofia)

At the same time as Sofia says this, her sword shines once again.

A scream leaks out from the flying dragon, Nagi, that was staying still in the sky.

"Nagi?! Y-Your wing! You, what have you done?!!" (Mora)

Mora's words came fast. Nagi's posture crumbles.

At that instance, the wing at the other side touched the light sword.

A burning smell, and also another scream occurred.

The feet of Tomoki's group was unstable, and yet, Sofia was firmly standing at the back of the dragon that was shaking violently as it drops.

"Well then, I will be waiting at the bottom. It is fine to come with your companions, and it is also fine to come alone. Just that, the moment you point a sword at me, no matter if you are a child, I won't care. Come with the proper resolve" (Sofia)

Sofia jumps down from the back of Nagi which could only be seen as a suicidal action.

Confirming Lancer's position with the light sword's navigation line, she returns to her companion's side.

"How was it? Was it a man worthy of being serious for?" (Lancer)

"There's not even the need to use 'that'. No matter how many come, no, it would be an opponent that would be easier if coming in groups. At that rate, I feel like he would be stronger alone" (Sofia)

"Hoh~ but I heard that he rarely fights alone though" (Lancer)

"That's just my intuition. Also, that flying dragon, it was a bit good. If possible, I would want to make it mine" (Sofia)

"… It is better to have as much spoils as possible huh. Do as you wish. For a flying dragon, I think the "Crimson Light Akari" would be plenty enough though" (Lancer)

Lancer shows amazement at Sofia's evaluation of the flying dragon.

At the same time, he mentions the name 'Crimson Light' which is a Superior Dragon just like himself, but because of his vagueness, the true meaning of those words were not understandable.

"That has other uses. Ara, they are here. The flying dragon is down huh. It would be troublesome to look for them later then" (Sofia)

While Sofia and Lancer were leisurely talking in the battlefield,

Tomoki's party showed themselves.

Nagi was nowhere to be seen.

'It is probably resting at the landing point' is the conclusion Sofia arrived at.

The place spoken of is in no way a safe place. It is in the middle of the battlefield after all.

Of course, the demon race won't come attacking them.

But in the battlefield, there's plenty of moments where your own allies make mistakes.

Hyumans and demons are desperate in defeating each other.

Sofia and Lancer were only talking together, but it wasn't as if they weren't receiving attacks from any side.

The attacks that were raining down and the attacks that were done by soldiers that have lost their mind, were all dealt with by freely controlling the several abundant light swords of Lancer.

In the midst of that spray of blood, those two were talking worry-free.

"No cares if it's hyumans or demons? You guys are crazy"

"Ara, they are attacking us after all. That's why I am just properly responding them. Well then, let's begin. If you lose, the Kingdom and the Empire will be in a big pinch. Do your best, okay?" (Sofia)

"I am a hero that holds the divine protection of the Goddess. Don't underestimate me just because you are a Dragon Slayer!" (Tomoki)

"Yeah, I won't be sealing it. Let me test it, my current power!!" (Sofia)

Sofia approaches with sword in hand at the place Tomoki and Ginebia are preparing themselves in.

That assasin's blade seizes the hero and the royal guard.

"?"

"You fell for it! Earth Doll's restrain, Mad Rail!"

With a puzzled face, Sofia looks at the two that were cut down the moment they readied their stance.

As if answering her questions, a voice resounds from afar.

It was the voice of Yukinatsu who is adept in the use of Golems.

The figures of Tomoki, Ginebia, and also the other two that remain, crumbled, and then it coiled around Sofia as if they were tentacles.

"… Heh~ I couldn't tell the difference. What an impressive spell" (Sofia)

"The consciousness is being sent directly from the person itself. Quite elaborate, right? Let me tell you something, it won't be good to try getting out of it!" (Yukinatsu)

"Really? Is it made of a strong material or something–?!" (Sofia)

"I was just making noise until it finished transmuting, but it looks like it wasn't needed" (Yukinatsu)

"It turned hard. Well thought out" (Sofia)

Sofia who confirms that the restrain changed into a black shining mineral, praises Yukinatsu.

"Is that composure? Or could it be, self-conceit? I wonder how long you can protect yourself from concentrated fire in that restraint state. Show her! Tomoki-sama!" (Yukinatsu)

"Well done, Yukinatsu! Ginebia, just in case, maintain defensive stance; Mora, match me. Let's give some presents to Sofia! At a level that won't kill her, okay?" (Tomoki)

"How dare you do that to Nagi! Unforgivable!" (Mora)

“It’s okay to not hold back. Come at me full force. That ojo-chan over there as well. You might not be able to meet that flying dragon ever again, so come at me with the intent to kill” (Sofia)

At Tomoki’s orders, the angered Mora shouts for her injured partner.

However, while completely restraint, Sofia, instead of saying hold back, provoked them to not hold back.

“… This woman is getting ahead of herself. In that case, I will do as you wish!” (Tomoki)

“Die!!!” (Mora)

The five types of weapons Tomoki possesses all activate at once.

Strong armaments that don’t depend on the divine protection of the Goddess, weapons that he himself possesses and were suited for him.

Dagger Gladius, Spear Artemis, Thin Sword Rapier, and the Small Arm Hand-Gun.

These are the weapons he currently possesses in his general firepower.

Right now he is treating the God-spear he considered a companion in his fight in Stella Fort, as a sub.

The strongest line-up for firepower.

In his left hand, a gun; at his right hand, the God-spear; the other three weapons were floating in mid-air and were around Tomoki.

This is the reason why he uses these three weapons.

Those three are weapons that can show their highest firepower even without being in one’s hands.

They possess powerful might, and they are able to endow elements in its attacks.

The gun in his hand is something that the Empire is strictly safekeeping in a certain town.

It possesses the light element and was given to Tomoki by the princess.

From its shape, Princess Lily thought that it would be useful for her development in guns, but this magic gun that is specialized in shooting magic power, was not that much useful when developing small arms that use gunpowder.

Because its inner structure couldn't serve as reference.

Its outside shape was similar, but she judged that it was something different.

But well, as a powerful sacred treasure in the hands of the hero, it was fulfilling its role plenty well.

The five attacks Tomoki fired and the two attacks Mora released, rained onto Sofia.

A thunderous sound and an explosion.

If it were released onto troops, its firepower would easily kill at least a hundred.

Thinking about the after-effects in the military formation and the damage, it can be said that this is quite the strong attack.

And this attack was received at close range, concentrated in a single point.

If Ginebia's defense wall wasn't protecting Tomoki's party, it might have injured them as well.

Even within the Superior Dragon's, 'Sand Wave' is considered as having high defensive power, and it was because it was Ginebia herself who was given this power that made it possible to mitigate this attack.

"Heh… If she is alive, I wouldn't mind adding her as one of my

women” (Tomoki)

“Onii-chan! It is the woman that left Nagi in that state you know?! I am against it!” (Mora)

“Tomoki-sama, I am also against that idea. I felt like that person holds a dangerous ideology” (Ginebia)

“Even if you want to add her, it would be better to consult Lily-sama first” (Yukinatsu)

At Tomoki’s victorious words, his companions unanimously object.

Just Yukinatsu showed an ‘on hold’ mood, but her expression was unpleased.

“Oioi, you guys. Why are you being so carefree? You are fighting against Sofia, you know? Pile up more attacks and shower her” (Lancer)

The boy shows a behavior not fitting his appearance and reproaches the hero’s party.

His voice came from a place where their vision didn’t reach, at a faraway location.

The boy was at the back of Sofia a few moments ago.

Of course, he must have received a direct hit along with Sofia, or somewhere close to it.

There’s no way he would be okay.

At the very least, he wouldn’t be without injuries.

Tomoki looked at the cleared up place with eyes filled of disbelief.

Without obeying the words of ‘Continue piling up attacks’.

“Oioi”

“No way”

“Impossible”

“It was certainly a direct hit”

From each mouth came out a denial of reality.

“That was impressive. See? The restraining magic from just now was destroyed into pieces” (Sofia)

Sofia was standing.

“Also, even when you mixed that many elements, the firepower didn’t mutually intrude each other. What an artistic attack. Your coordination with that ojo-chan was also perfect. I was making fun of your charm, but it seems you are able to perform quite the good coordination” (Sofia)

While cracking her shoulders, she swings her sword.

As if doing warm-up exercises.

“But well, it wasn’t to the level that it would create a lake. I already have experience in that kind of out-of-norm attack. And we both were able to defend perfectly against it” (Sofia)

Sofia was showing those ferocious eyes she showed on the back of the flying dragon for a second.

The movements of the woman that looked as if she were doing stretches, were calm, and she slowly raised her right arm.

The thin sword points at Tomoki.

A smile steadily spreads at her whole face.

Conversely, Tomoki’s face showed slight agitation.

“I ended up reminiscing a bit. I was thinking about caressing you with about 5% of my power, but if you are able to do this much, I think it would be fine to increase it a bit, right?!” (Sofia)

Sofia’s figure disappears.

No, it didn't disappear.

And as such, Ginebia showed a response.

It is just that an ordinary person wouldn't be able to follow her moves.

As the strongest shield that protects Tomoki, she fulfilled that role.

"Now, Tomoki! Show me the power of a hero! Don't finish with just a warm-up!" (Sofia)

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"Well then, I have cleaned up the surroundings. Sofia is… fumu, done huh"

Lancer looks at the surroundings and nods. He confirms the state of Sofia who was rampaging at his front.

It was silent.

There's already no one there.

It was the deed of Lancer.

At the back of Sofia who had begun seriously fighting the hero, he was killing everyone that entered his line of sight.

Reduce the amount of witnesses, is also one of the reasons he had, but it was mostly because he wanted to confirm his own power.

Being almost killed by Sofia once, his own power was quite weakened.

Even at the time when he was fighting the Devil, with Makoto, he was only able to use about half of his power.

After facing a painful experience because of him, for about half a year, Lancer was finally able to completely recover his power as a Superior Dragon.

'It has finally returned to this point', is what Lancer thought as he

nods satisfied.

“Sofia! What are you going to do with them? If you kill the hero, you would be able to get the Demon Lord to owe you. I think it would be good to do it” (Lancer)

He talks to Sofia.

Right now she was looking at the 4 defeated ones.

Miraculously, no one was dead.

No, there’s no way something so convenient has occurred.

It is just that Sofia didn’t kill anyone.

“… That means not everyone is as out-of-norm like that guy huh. Lighting up my fire in such a half-baked manner. Hey, you are a hero right?! You have more cards to play right?! Stand up! Fight!” (Sofia)

“Yareyare, he can’t hear you anymore huh” (Lancer)

Without holding back, Sofia slices at Tomoki who can’t even react properly and can only moan.

Without caring that Tomoki was already prostrated on the ground.

His abdomen, chest, arm, leg, neck, head; each time he was cut, he convulses, but there was no other reaction from him bigger than that.

It regenerated immediately and returned to its beautiful state, but it wasn’t a sight to behold.

The Royal Guard Ginebia who is normally the one that should be protecting him, has received a fatal injury and is lying at a place faraway from him.

If there was a miracle or whatever, she would have immediately gone to help Tomoki, but the convulsing self that didn’t care if she is conscious or not, made it harsh for her.

Her wide open eyes had blood flowing out, but she wasn't blinking.

While her whole body had few wounds, the hole that's opened at her side was overflowing with blood.

She was in a dangerous state.

Mora and Yukinatsu were in a similar state, no, since they have low defensive power, those girls were in an even more precarious state.

Mora had both her legs severed from her knees, her right hand was chopped into pieces, and was in a crouching position as if doing a dogeza. Yukinatsu was crucified on the ground, her limbs were pierced by light swords and her whole body didn't show a single movement.

The three of them were still breathing.

Considering the number and ability of healers in the Empire, their wounds were severe, but they were still saveable.

That is, if they are able to escape from this situation.

It's quite the low chance.

Tomoki, knowing this or maybe not, he screamed several times before shouting and standing.

This is an astonishing action that can be done by Tomoki exactly because of his regeneration abilities limited at night.

Sofia didn't pursuit and was motionlessly staring at Tomoki who is standing and moving his shoulders up and down.

His expression was filled with exhaustion.

Can't be helped.

The night provides him with a body that won't lose; it provides immortality.

But even if that's the case, it doesn't mean he won't get stressed

when cut.

It will be carved in his body, so there's no way it won't burden him.

The silver boots, that were bestowed by the Goddess, eliminated his exhaustion, but it won't remove the burden in his heart.

Even Tomoki who doesn't feel pain anymore, being sliced infinite amount of times by Sofia was something his mind couldn't take.

A merciless instantaneous regeneration that anyone who sees it would think that it would be better to just die.

Even if his sense of pain is gone, if he were able to maintain a normal state of mind in this situation, he wouldn't be an ordinary person.

If Tomoki is still sane, his heart would clearly make a change and would have obtained an abnormal level of tenacity.

"Ara, I'm glad. Do you still have something? Hey, Tomoki-kun?" (Sofia)

"You… monstrous lunatic. Against an unmoving opponent, you sliced again and again!" (Tomoki)

A voice that one can feel exhaustion from.

But the will in his eyes was not that different from the time he was on the back of Nagi.

Looking at the glaring Tomoki, Sofia was internally in admiration and opens her mouth.

"It's because I thought you couldn't move anymore. Different from those girls there, you were still able to move but were trying to let it pass by not moving, right? 'Don't you have something more~?' is what I thought. Ah and also, to call a woman monster, that's discourteous, you know?" (Sofia)

"… Even though you are a hyuman, you went and allied with the demon race. I don't want to hear that from someone like you!"

(Tomoki)

Learning that his thoughts were seen through, Tomoki internally clicks his tongue.

If Lily were in a place where she can grasp the situation there, she might have used better moves and would have carried the situation to a more favorable one, is how he thought.

He soon shakes his head to the sides.

Because he thought that she wasn't an enemy they can defeat in any way.

Because he judged that their current selves wouldn't be able to defeat her.

That's why he confirmed the other three were still breathing and intended to let it pass by playing dead.

But Sofia persistently tormented Tomoki.

Knowing that the limit of those three was closing, Tomoki got impatient.

He held an item that let him know the current state of their party members.

That's why he was waiting until now.

That's right. Tomoki had a grasp of the state of his three companions.

They were still okay, but as long as their enemy doesn't give up, the limit will reach in time.

And that critical point was now.

"Tomoki-kun, show me. The power of heroes. You are not in checkmate yet, right? Your eyes are not dead" (Sofia)

"Don't mess around!!" (Tomoki)

Tomoki shouted abusive language.

Just like how Sofia said, he still had a trump card.

He has one, but it is something he can't use right now.

That dilemma was making him hesitate even more.

Without preparing a weapon, or setting up a spell…

"Damn it… damn it, damn it!!" (Tomoki)

"… Hmph~ is there some sort of prerequisite? Ah, those girls being here are your shackles, right?" (Sofia)

At the abusive language Tomoki was repeating for unknown reasons, Sofia seems to have comprehended something and nodded.

She was sure her intuition was not wrong and does an inner laugh.

"What… did you say?" (Tomoki)

As if seen through, Tomoki gets surprised.

"It's fine. So, should I kill those girls first? Or do you want to try saying: "Please save me"?" (Sofia)

Sofia laughs with amusement.

Lancer, who at some point had gotten close to her, sighs at the bad habit of Sofia.

"… If they die… I won't show you my trump card even if it kills me. You want to see it right? In that case, bring my companions back to the Empire first. You guys should be able to do that" (Tomoki)

"You are half correct. Right, it would be troublesome if you don't show it to me. It's sad that I didn't hear a 'Please save me' but, can I ask you to do it?" (Sofia)

Sofia looks at Lancer.

“… Fine. It’s okay to just bring those close to death fools to the Empire, right?” (Lancer)

“In front of the castle” (Tomoki)

“So many requests. Is being shameless one of the powers of a hero?” (Lancer)

“Say whatever you want” (Tomoki)

When Lancer shows a smile filled with contempt at Tomoki’s maddened eyes, he disappears along with the three severely injured to the Empire, and to the castle gate to top it off.

“I have kept my promise. Now then, show it to me. The seriousness of the Goddess’ divine protection!” (Sofia)

“How regrettable” (Tomoki)

“… What?” (Sofia)

The peaceful voice of Tomoki made Sofia show a stern face for a second.

“What I am going to show you now is not the divine protection of the Goddess. It is a super rare power that only a few who have gone around the world and fulfilled the requirements, are able to use. Even Hibiki can’t use it” (Tomoki)

Tomoki returns the contempt Lancer threw at him, right back at Sofia.

“Hibiki… the Kingdom’s hero huh. Hmph～ I heard the heroes came from a parallel world, but within them there’s rank divisions. That’s surprising. But if it’s that, I don’t really mind. Go on!” (Sofia)

“… It’s fine, taste it. The humiliating light that burned my country in the past. I will reproduce it in this world! This was your own doing so, prepare yourself!” (Tomoki)

“How exaggerated. Are the otherworldlers devils, or are the devils from other worlds? If you are going to confirm it, I don’t really

care” (Sofia)

Tomoki pushes both arms to the front.

Connecting an aria that she has never heard before, Sofia was looking at him.

But she had her sword prepared. She already deployed her strongest defense and was waiting for Tomoki’s attack.

In time, a light is born in front of the hands of Tomoki.

It shines dazzlingly, a light so strong that one can’t see it directly.

The expression of Sofia dyes in joy.

Because she is sure she would be able to endure ‘that attack’ that was almost able to kill her in the past.

Tomoki shouts what seems to be the name of the spell.

At that moment…

The ball explodes with them as the centre. Ripping up the night, a dome of light was born.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

In a place slightly further away from the Empire, a giant crater was created.

Moreover, outside the diameter of the blast, a gruesome scenery of destruction was spread out.

It didn’t reach till the Empire.

Tomoki’s attack had created a scar a lot worse than the one attack Makoto did when he created a lake.

What was slightly different was the cast and the conclusion.

At the centre of the explosion, there’s one person who had lost consciousness and fallen to the ground.

And then…

The other one had its sword back at its sheath, and standing with blue light enveloping its body.

“Quite the brutal trump card he had” (Lancer)

“Mitsurugi. Yeah, it was more fiendish than the arrow of the devil at that time. If we received this attack at that time, I would have been dead” (Sofia)

“Hoh~ to make you say all this, as expected of a hero huh” (Lancer)

“Hero… no, I wonder about that. It might have been Tomoki-kun’s own willpower” (Sofia)

“Tomoki-kun, you say. You are completely friendly now. Did you get charmed as well?” (Lancer)

“No way. This spell… well, not sure if it’s actually a spell but, it had quite the powerful fire element” (Sofia)

“Fire huh” (Lancer)

“And it’s a strenuous skill that shaves off some of the life of its user. But you know, the scary part is not that” (Sofia)

“What then?” (Lancer)

“Counting you, everyone that received the attack, the people that luckily survived, and also the people that luckily weren’t around the scope as well; they have been endowed with a special poison or curse” (Sofia)

“?!”

“Fufufu, a power that can’t be scolded. Maybe it is easier to call it a poisonous fire? Come here, I will cure you” (Sofia)

“I have also been endowed with it huh. Sorry, I am counting on you” (Lancer)

When Lancer finds Sofia at the center of the crater, he glances at the fallen hero and begins to talk with Sofia.

And then, after listening to the trump card of Tomoki from Sofia, he headed to where Sofia is while in shock.

An invisible poison, this curse isn't something that Lancer knew about, but if Sofia says so, it should be believed, is what Lancer thought.

He obediently gets bathed by the blue light.

"Hm, so long. Was it so strong?" (Lancer)

"Yeah. I still haven't completely removed mine either. When I checked my body just in case, I was already afflicted by it. He really got me there" (Sofia)

"By the looks, I can't really tell though…" (Lancer)

"But it certainly eats into your life. It distorts the foundations of your body and alters it. A fiendish type. Without caring about allies or enemies. It seems he himself is excluded from this, but it is quite the lovely power. I think he said something like 'Nuke'" (Sofia)

"No matter if ally or enemy huh. Certainly that's to your taste huh, that so called 'Nuke' spell. And then, Tomoki, it was him huh. Having the flying dragon killed, I thought your mood would be bad, but it seems there was no need to worry about it" (Lancer)

"Flying dragon huh. It is regrettable, but I was able to see something nice so it is fine. Well then, connect the thought transmission that was cut off. Ah, Mitsurugi. Don't touch the hero-sama that is lying there, okay? That boy seems to be interesting, so I won't kill him yet" (Sofia)

"Not yet huh. Well, with that composure of yours, it doesn't seem like it will become an hindrance in the future. This one doesn't mind" (Lancer)

Sofia stretches widely at the centre of the explosion and closed her eyes as if feeling good.

(Rona, do you hear me?) (Sofia)

(I felt tremendous magic power! The thought transmission got cut off, so there's no contact from the units. Just what is going on?!) (Rona)

While laughing at the demon general Rona that responded immediately at the thought transmission of Sofia, she explains the situation to Rona.

Of course, halfheartedly.

(I was fighting Tomoki-kun and he used his trump card you see～. Ah, looks like his regeneration ability at night was true. If I had to correct anything, it would be that he is close to immortal. And so, that tremendous magic power was from his attack. He really got me there～. I wasn't in a position where I could mind the other units you see) (Sofia)

(Trump card?! What was it?) (Rona)

(It seemed to be a quite vast scope fire element magic. It had a wide area and high power. The range and power were standing at the same height, so it was difficult to deal with) (Sofia)

(A spell's standard notion doesn't matter to heroes. How irrational. And so, what happened to the hero? Did you finish him?) (Rona)

Rona asks the hero's state to Sofia.

Sofia lowers her gaze and looks at Tomoki who is still unconscious.

His chest was systematically going up and down. It can be seen that his life is safe.

(It's regrettable but, he escaped. Sorry) (Sofia)

(… I see. If you even brought out his trump card, it is enough. Good work) (Rona)

(About the details of the scope, you can just check the crater later. The outside has also received quite the damage, so you can

probably estimate the effective range to a certain extent) (Sofia)

(Thanks. I will soon send subordinates there. Can you two return to Stella once?) (Rona)

(Yeah. We are quite tired. Can you please let us rest—) (Sofia)

(Sofia?) (Rona)

The thought transmission of Sofia suddenly stops.

It wasn't jamming.

It felt like she just lost her words.

Thinking that it was strange, Rona calls Sofia, but there was no response.

"Mitsurugi, you saw that, right?" (Sofia)

(Mitsurugi, you saw that, right?) (Sofia)

After a while, Sofia's thought transmission and words overlap.

Normally, she would have cut off the thought transmission before saying anything.

It was a rare mistake for someone like her.

Rona was about to respond to her voice, but refrained from doing so.

Because she noticed that she began talking while forgetting to cut off the thought transmission.

Concealing her breath, she waits for the next words of Sofia.

"Yeah, I saw it. Certainly… it's that fellow" (Lancer)

Lancer looks at the same direction Sofia is looking at and mutters.

It wasn't exactly the same as last time, but a moment ago, a light pillar shone and descended to Limia.

A bitter memory is recalled in both of their minds.

“Yeah, no doubt. If it’s in this current situation, it is definitely in the Limia capital. Your powers have already returned, so you should be able to fly right, Mitsurugi?” (Sofia)

(Yeah, no doubt. If it’s in this current situation, it is definitely in the Limia capital. Your powers have already returned, so you should be able to fly right, Mitsurugi?) (Sofia)

“Yeah, if it’s to Limia, it won’t even take 30 minutes. But it appeared again at the crisis of hyumans huh. As expected, he is actually the protector of hyumans?” (Lancer)

“Well, who knows. But… we will kill him, this is our longstanding desire. Isn’t this an unparalleled chance?” (Sofia)

(Well, who knows. But… we will kill him, this is our longstanding desire. Isn’t this an unparalleled chance?) (Sofia)

Just what are they talking about?

Rona still couldn’t understand the particulars.

The only thing she understood is that an uncalculated factor has occurred at the Limia capital.

“That’s right. Sofia, let’s go. We are bringing him down” (Lancer)

“Just you wait, Devil. Right now I am coming to eliminate you, to kill you” (Sofia)

(Just you wait, Devil. Right now I am coming to eliminate you, to kill you) (Sofia)

Rona was close to lifting her voice, but desperately held it back. She silently cut off the thought transmission.

What a dilemma.

To think that the greatest insecure factor would not appear in Rotsgard or the Empire, but in the Kingdom’s capital where they

want to succeed the most.

There's still no reports from the capital yet.

The thought transmission has already been restored.

The detailed information should soon be relayed.

Rona bites somethinh while waiting for that moment.

"If even those two monsters are going to fight the Devil, Hibiki should die without doubt. Also, I should soon be receiving contact from Io's unit, that's why…" (Rona)

Even if Io is weak at thought transmission, it doesn't mean that no one in his unit can use it.

After not much lag of a time, she should be able to understand the situation at the capital.

(Rona-sama)

It's here.

With the highest concentration she has had as of today, Rona receives the transmission.

(Report) (Rona)

(Yes!! We are currently at the capital. The strategy of bringing down the hero is in progress. The battle between Io-sama and Hibiki has begun. Confirmed that we are in the advantage)

(…)

A good report.

If they are already in battle, Io won't make mistakes, is what Rona thought.

She silently listens to the continuation of the report.

(While our losses are big, we are also fighting against the forces of

the capital. But…)

The words of the subordinate stagnate.

(Continue) (Rona)

(Yes. We have confirmed a mysterious light piercing the royal castle. Based on the report of a close-aide of Io-sama, an intruder appeared after arriving from a golden light or a ball of darkness!)

(The numbers? Name? Is the standing indicated?) (Rona)

(A Lich with extraordinary magic power and a pure white humanoid being; two people. Anything else is completely unknown, is what the report said)

(A humanoid being? Not a hyuman?) (Rona)

Hearing the word Lich, she had a connection in mind, but more importantly, Rona was irritated by the vague report of a humanoid being.

If the words of Sofia were true, that is the Devil. The chances of it being the insecure factor is incredibly high, so it couldn't helped.

(We don't know. It would be good if we were able to assist as well, but the opposition is intense and we can't break the balance)

(Kuh. Okay, good work. Please continue by supporting general Io) (Rona)

(Yes. I will be fulfilling my task with my life on the line!)

The thought transmission ends.

A Lich and a white humanoid being.

Is it the Devil or another person, no, more importantly, is it an enemy or an ally?

Rona stands up.

A face that says this is not the time to be fortifying Stella.

Giving orders to the small remaining troops, they finished the attack to the Empire. Rona, who was going to wait and see how the events at Io's side would turn out, repeatedly teleports, the destination was the Kingdom's capital.

This is not the time to be worrying about the fatigue of another rally.

For her, no, for the demon race, this is an incredibly important strategy.

Its failure and success are hanging on the line.

Chapter 154: Participation of the Devil ③

The sudden march of the demon race to the Kingdom's capital.

While the Kingdom's hero, Otonashi Hibiki, held strong agitation and uneasiness, she still conducted herself.

Against the march of the demon race, Hibiki suggested for the Limia capital to change their functions to another place because their forces were in a disadvantageous position.

But there was strong opposition from the nobles, the history in it being one of the reasons. The suggestion was not heard, and in the end, they ended up facing this day.

At the Stella Fort capture operation, the capital was close to receiving the flames of war, and yet, they still acted this way.

Their lack of contemplation irritated her.

(We are doing war, you know? If we lose, this town, this castle will be brought down. The historical value itself would lose all meaning) (Hibiki)

Talking about the knowledge of Hibiki in war, she doesn't hold that much experience.

She was just summoned from the peaceful Japan as a hero. And in terms of war experience, the soldiers and nobles of this world have more than her.

But after being forced these many close battles, their tendency of looking at the demon race as lower beings still persists.

Especially the nobles of higher power and the upper stratum department of the country; they were looking at the threat of the

demon race in a somewhat positive manner.

There's no basis. It's just an optimism stemming from their view of the demons as an inferior race.

That irritated Hibiki.

The King and a part of the nobles have begun criticizing this optimistic view of the demon race threat, but it is hasn't reached the point where it can change the country.

No matter how much the country's thoughts change to a favorable direction for Hibiki, it will be pointless if it doesn't change in time.

"Hibiki! The castle gates have been grappled! Those guys, with these numbers, they are seriously trying to bring down the castle!" (Bredda)

The words of her party companion, the knight Bredda, pointed out at the deteriorating situation.

Right now, the King who can give absolute orders, was not in the capital.

Because he was participating in the event of Academy Town, Rotsgard.

The school festival that comes once a year.

In this time when they are planning on attacking Stella Fort again in the frontlines, this wasn't something that would normally merit the King himself to participate.

In the past years, the King rarely participated.

However, there was information that this year the person who has the most influential power over the Empire's hero, Princess Lily, would be participating in the school festival.

Being allied countries that are fighting together against the demon race in the frontlines, at the same time, both the Kingdom and the Empire are rivals as well.

Unable to understand the reason why the other party has taken an action they didn't take in the past years, the King ended up heading there himself.

It would have been fine to have Hibiki do that, but she is also a direct fighting potential in the attack to Stella, so it was judged that there was no need for her to head there herself.

Also, they are the ones attacking the Stella Fortress.

The hyumans will be attacking the fortress that the demon race is protecting heavily, with their objective being recapture.

The timing of the attack was decided by the hyumans, in other words, it was thought that it would be decided by the Kingdom and the Empire.

That's why it was decided that it would be fine to just attack after the school festival was over.

(And this is the result. A march from the demon race. I didn't expect it either, but the sequence of events was the total worst. This happened because the hyumans showed an opening by pulling their legs mutually after all) (Hibiki)

Just what kind of method did the demon race utilize to get pass the Limia Kingdom's army that were posted at the frontlines and were able to suddenly appear at the vicinity of Seiko?

What a ridiculous thing.

Seiko is in a place not that far from the capital. It's the lake that was recently created by the mysterious being called Devil.

It was an incident that mercilessly dragged a great amount of troops from the hyumans and the demons, but because of this, they were able to prevent the surprise attack to the capital.

It is also an existence that reminds them of a harsh lesson.

Depending on the speed of the march, from Seiko to the capital, it would take around several hours.

If it's mostly composed of foot soldiers, it would take even more. In normal circumstances, the defense unit would deal with it immediately.

However, it is close.

It's fine to even call it point blank range.

This kind of surprise attack was not done towards a town close to the regional borders, but at the capital, which left Hibiki in shock.

At least, it was unthinkable that this was brought upon by the looseness of the current Kingdom's army.

They were ready to attack Stella Fort within these few days, in other words, they were close to a battle-ready state.

They should have been putting force in their alertness as well.

And yet, they easily let their forces invade.

In the past, they were surprised by their advanced technique in thought transmission, but with this time's events, Hibiki was thinking that maybe the techniques of the demon race greatly surpassed that of the hyumans.

And in truth, there have been orders to improve the thought transmission, but there has been no real progress in sight.

(Even if we surpass them in numbers and individual talent, if there's this much difference in technique…) (Hibiki)

"The adventurer unit is securing the retreat path. Hibiki-sama, Bredda-dono, and Chiya, please head there with haste"

When the thoughts of Hibiki were heading to the harsh state of the war, the voice of a male other than Bredda reaches the ears of Hibiki.

Wudi.

A royal court magician and, among the magicians of Limia, there's

no one with more ability than him.

In ability and knowledge, and also as a researcher, he is an existence whose name is known around the world.

“Escape? We are going to escape… in this situation?” (Hibiki)

“Hibiki-sama, please understand. The movement of the enemy is way too fast. We should retreat from the capital, and after gathering the troops that are around the towns in the vicinity and in Stella, we can siege the capital again. I think that this is the ideal move in order recover” (Wudi)

“… Heh~. Wudi, are you saying that we should let the demon race have the history-filled capital, even if temporarily?” (Hibiki)

“… Hibiki-sama, please stop the sarcasm. Right now the King is not here, and the idiots that cry about history and tradition have already ran away. We are currently the ones who hold the highest authority in this castle. At this occasion, I think it would be good to show them results and have them shut up. Doing a defensive battle in this place is already reckless” (Wudi)

“That’s why I told them to move at least the functions of the capital to a place around the Hopelace household. There’s leg pulling even between the high nobles. How unbearable” (Hibiki)

“Ilumgand-dono was quite in favor of this proposal though” (Wudi)

“Ilum huh. Something is happening at the Academy Town he is in as well. It seems like this situation has been relayed to the King-sama already, but the information relay is so slow it is displeasing. In this kind of times, I really can feel the inconvenience of thought transmission. Cell-phones were pretty impressive huh” (Hibiki)

“Portable phones, was it? Our technology has not developed as far as Hibiki-sama’s country, so something like that is just… We have no choice but to pray for their safety” (Bredda)

The information sharing between Academy Town and the Kingdom can be considered quite deficient.

‘If there were cellphones’, is what Hibiki complained about. Based on her own customs, it couldn’t be helped.

Hearing the words of the magician, Hibiki falls into thought.

The person himself is probably still in the thought that it hasn’t been revealed yet, but Hibiki is already aware that Bredda is the prince of this country.

It is originally something that can’t be hidden anyways, so it is obvious.

But she didn’t really make any allusions to it.

Bredda is a competent companion, and more importantly, because he is accompanying them, the discretion towards them increases.

She easily judged that there was no merit in pursuing the subject.

“Right, sorry. And then, Wudi, what are the chances of success?” (Hibiki)

“Plenty enough. Don’t know if it’s because it’s a surprise attack, or because they have already reached the limit amount of troops they could conceal; they don’t have the actual numbers to bring down the capital. Adding to that, the capital is our garden. We are familiar with the hidden passages and the methods of infiltration. I think we can definitely wipe them out” (Wudi)

“That’s true. It looks like they are plunging onto the castle as if they were impatient. Evading and surrounding them would have less casualties huh. To go through the trouble of playing along would be stupid” (Bredda)

“That’s how it is, Bredda-dono. Those guys shouldn’t be able to keep that same speed against the castle. In this situation, it’s actually convenient that the King was absent. Now, if we and Hibiki-sama manage to escape—” (Wudi)

“Hey, hey～”

In the conversation between Bredda and Wudi, the youngest girl

among the group intrudes into the conversation with reserve.

Lorel Union's Priestess, Chiya.

Adoring Hibiki, she is accompanying her.

Her travelling together with the hero party is causing diplomatic problems between Limia and the Lorel Union, but her abilities as a priestess are high.

The healing and support she provides, and depending on the situation she also cooperates in adding firepower; she has already become an existence that is indispensable in their group.

"Chiya-chan, what happened?" (Hibiki)

Hibiki prompts Chiya to continue.

"Yeah. If we run, what will happen to the people here?" (Chiya)

"…"

"…"

"…"

There was no one who could immediately answer Chiya's question.

No, they couldn't say it, is more accurate.

What would happen?

The fate of the people that couldn't escape in time… there was no need to think about it.

"Chiya-chan, listen well" (Hibiki)

"Y-Yeah" (Chiya)

"This town, and this country, I will definitely not let the demon race have it. For that sake, there have been many lives lost in the process. We have to shoulder the feelings of those people, and we can't escape from it" (Hibiki)

"…"

"We will win this war. We will stop the march of the demon race and obtain peace. We will survive. We have to accomplish this. No matter how painful it is, we have to endure" (Hibiki)

"… Are you talking about Naval-oneechan?" (Chiya)

"… Yeah, that's also… part of it. That's why…" (Hibiki)

"Hibiki, are you still here?! So you were! Great!"

While Hibiki was persuading Chiya, a new voice calls her.

The leader of the adventurer group that decided to fight alongside her against the demon race and went with her to Limia in the time she stayed at Tsige in summer.

"Sorry, Wudi-san. Securing the escape path might have turned a bit bad. The contact with the people that headed there has ceased. And that's why I am here, but I am glad you are fine"

"… The evacuation of the citizens that I asked of you, how far has it progressed?" (Wudi)

Wudi asks him about the progress of the job he asked of them.

He just told them the request from Hibiki, but Wudi was also worried about it.

It is also because his family is also in the people that are evacuating.

It seems he had self-control to not ask directly about his wife and child.

"It's difficult. At best, I would say around 30%. There's fires happening here and there, and it is causing a panic state. It is taking us our all. We do have several people guiding the citizens, but it will probably not reach the 50%. If it reaches that number it would be great, is how it would be. The sole relief is the distribution of demons"

“The demons’ distribution is a relief?” (Hibiki)

Hibiki felt like those words were contradictory and asks the man that is explaining.

“… In the group that is attacking this place, there’s orcs and goblins as well”

The names Orc and Goblin come out from the man’s mouth, and in that tone, there’s scorn mixed in.

It is a matter of course.

At times, they have been employed to defeat high-ranking mamonos and demi-humans with special abilities. But the Orcs and Goblins are loyal to their instincts and their conduct is ugly.

Even in the people that have opposition to killing mamonos, Orcs and Goblins are existences that are hated enough to kill.

“Yeah, that’s obvious” (Hibiki)

Hibiki has already seen with her eyes their loyalty towards their own greed, and she has cut down an innumerable amount of them.

“But in this capital, the places that have been plundered and the women that have been violated, from what I have seen… there’s none”

“None?!”

“That’s right. Even those guys are being precisely commanded, and aside from the defense unit and targeted citizens, they don’t waste time in other things. They are aiming for the castle and charging at it”

“…”

“I was honestly surprised. For our side that is working at evacuating, it makes it easier, but as an army to fight against, I think they are several times more troublesome”

“Then, the citizens are somewhat safe, right?”

“No. They don’t steal or violate, but the people that catch their eyes will be thoroughly killed by them. If the people hide it is easier to be saved, but if they find you, it would be a lot harder to escape from than how it would usually be”

‘’…’

“Anyways, to break down this situation, I think that encirclement is the only method. We should leave to the outsides of the capital”

“But the escape route…”

“That’s why I came to ask Wudi-san. Hey, instead of going from the capital to the outside, isn’t there a path that we can use to stealthily escape from the castle to the town? In this occasion, it would be easier to use the chaos to run through the town in one breath. And so, that’s how I want you guys to escape”

“… I see. The method that has the less insecure factor huh. Certainly, if it’s to run through in one breath, me and Chiya are here, so it is more advantageous for us than the bunch rampaging at the capital” (Wudi)

Wudi answers the man that turns the conversation to him.

Communication ceasing doesn’t equal to emergency situation.

But they have experience in a previous battle.

If they consider the possibility of the thought transmission being jammed, it would be better to think that some kind of problem occurred in the escape path they were trying to secure.

“Yeah. When I leave the capital, I will send thought transmissions to the defensive units that are around the area and will deploy them at once. I would like to hurry as much as possible”

“Understood. I will guide you. Also, it is okay to have the units currently fighting to steadily fall back. I will contact the other units myself. It is okay to fall back until this audience room. This place

won't be destroyed by anything normal, and there's also a strong support barrier. They should be able to endure for a while" (Wudi)

"That would be helpful. I will tell them immediately"

The man and Wudi begin their thought transmissions.

Hibiki was thinking about the high-leveled forces that were charging at the castle without looking aside, while she places a hand on the shoulder of the slightly nervous Chiya and waits for the moment to escape.

"… What? Hibiki, be careful. I feel some kind of vibration" (Bredda)

Bredda takes a battle stance and prepared for the abnormality he felt.

The small vibration that resounded from the floor, steadily got stronger.

Hibiki unsheathes her sword as if covering Chiya and prepared herself by facing a different direction from Bredda.

"Could it be… no way" (Wudi)

Wudi finishes the thought transmission and it seems he has noticed the abnormality as well.

He probably had something in mind. He looked at the King's throne, around the area where the stairs are.

And then…

Exactly in the place where he was looking at, a thunderous sound reverberated along with an explosion.

Several fragments reached where Hibiki and the others were and it was all intercepted.

The shadow that was slowly shaping at the rising smoke, Hibiki knew it.

She could feel her body stiffening.

“If you secured the escape route from the beginning, the people being chased would normally rely on that place. In this case, it would be better to consider that, from the very beginning, you were planning on intercepting us here, is that right, hero Hibiki?”

“Io… so you left Stella empty and came here?” (Hibiki)

With a face as if hearing a bad joke, Hibiki responds to the familiar voice.

A large builded body of 4 arms appeared, and it instilled tension to the people that confirmed this.

“The attack and defence is in constant fluctuation. Even if we are the side that is protecting the fortress, it isn’t like we promised not to attack, right?” (Io)

“If we were to attack the fortress right now, you would lose that location. Is that really okay? (Hibiki)

“Is that supposed to be a bluff? Because it seems that your side has already begun moving to return here though” (Io)

The overwhelming difference in the knowledge of the current state of the war.

Hibiki bites her lips.

She can’t even use the units that are stationed far away as bluff, so it is obvious why she had a bitter expression.

“… And? What reason you had to come out from that place like a mole?” (Hibiki)

“Hibiki-sama, that place is the escape route we were planning on using” (Wudi)

“!!”

The hesitant words of Wudi.

“It seems that way. I waited for a while and you guys showed no signs of coming you see. So I came here instead” (Io)

“… Our soldiers should have been there though” (Hibiki)

“Yeah, they were” (Io)

“Where are they?” (Hibiki)

“Do you even need to ask?” (Io)

The demon general asks as if amazed.

“Io, again… my comrades…” (Hibiki)

“That’s a difference in inclination, hero. Those people were originally adventurers from Tsige, weren’t they? The one who dragged them to this fight was no other than you. The man over there as well, if I remember correctly, he is also an adventurer from Tsige, right? Our side didn’t pay much mind to your exploration at the borders” (Io)

Io’s words were correct.

If Hibiki didn’t bring them here, the adventurers of Tsige wouldn’t have died.

It is also true that this isn’t something the killer himself should be saying though.

“Hoh~ For a demon general, you are quite generous towards the Tsige adventurers”

Being glanced by Io, the man responds with an exaggerated gesture while sweating from his forehead.

The moment he matched Io’s eyes to confront him, he understood the difference in powers.

It’s the class of enemy that he would have to escape with all his might when sighted from afar.

If he were to move as an adventurer, there's no other option aside from running away.

The demon general Io is that level of existence.

"… The adventurers of Tsige are the people that traverse the harsh wastelands. Our Lord respects you adventurers who put your base at those lands. He has ordered us to not lay our hands on you guys unless you point your sword at us" (Io)

"That's… thanks?"

"There's demons and demi-humans in that place, and there's also people who don't hold prejudice towards mamonos. From our view, that is something worth of respect. If you didn't come to Limia, you guys wouldn't have died. How regrettable" (Io)

"At the place you came from, there were some pretty strong guys though?"

"They were strong. What stood out was their fighting that used coordination as their core. In the middle of winter, the things I have to teach my subordinates has increased. I can't mourn for them in this time of battle, but I am grateful" (Io)

This is out of his reach.

That was the conclusion the man arrived to.

He was in complete agreement that this man is a demon general.

Ridiculous ability and composure.

And yet, he shows no openings.

Even in the middle of the conversation, he didn't give any chances to move.

"Hibiki, the match is too bad. Even if we are inside the support barrier, we shouldn't have a proper fight with him"

"Hey there, that would be troublesome. Hibiki, I will have you fight

me here… **and die**. I will think of this support barrier as advantage in location" (Io)

Io's body dyes in black.

The memories of losing Naval in Stella Fort revive in her mind.

A heavy and bitter memory.

At the same time, anger welled up as well, but without being controlled by it, she silently exhaled.

"… Sorry but, I have no intentions of fighting you here" (Hibiki)

"But you don't have that option. If you escape from this place, I don't think I will be able to hold back my subordinates that came with the resolve to die. The moment you guys abandon this place, there won't be a single resident here alive. After killing them all, if we end up encircled, we would have no choice but to chase the ones that escaped as well" (Io)

"That's dirty. As expected of a demon. Don't you know of cowardice?" (Hibiki)

The desperate provocation.

Leaving aside if this will actually work on the man called Io, she couldn't leave it unsaid.

"Of course I know this is not a moral thing to do… as a military man. However, right now I am the general leading the demon race. I am here as a soldier" (Io)

"Killing innocent people is a soldier?!" (Hibiki)

"This is not a war between countries. This is a war between races. And that ending will lead to the downfall of one side or endless slavery. You should have vaguely felt this too, right? Or don't tell me, the times you went destroying the settlements of mamonos, you were minding if the opponent was a soldier or a resident?" (Io)

"…"

“Our side is also desperate. Now then, what will you do? Will you still run away even when I pursue you, or will you bet on the small chance of defeating me here? Choose whichever you want. Of course, I will be beginning this by my own volition!”

The black body charges towards Hibiki and the others.

And in those four arms, there’s gauntlets with devoted design equipped on them.

Hibiki was pressed for a decision.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

Mio was on her knees.

The one she is against is the demon general Reft who has his lower half in the shape of a serpent.

The kimono that Mio is wearing was greatly damaged and her skin was showing.

Even so, the person in question, Mio, was not showing agitation nor anger.

Licking her lips, she stands up.

In that face, happiness could be felt.

“I don’t understand. Your attacks don’t work on me anymore. Or are you saying that you still have some sort of method against my ‘reflection’” (Reft)

“I don’t-desu wa ne. At first, you were being easily beaten up and I was disappointed thinking that you were a weakling with only his body as a trait. I am surprised that you were analyzing my attacks. I will praise you for that” (Mio)

“… I can’t understand. You don’t have other methods of attacks aside from shooting, cutting, or punching. Why can you still stand up when everything has been sealed? And that regenerating ability is clearly abnormal” (Reft)

Reft used his own body to analyze the attacks of Mio.

He grasped all the attacks she used, coped with them, and with his special ability ‘reflection’, he closed it.

She continuously repeated attacks that would be reflected.

It looked like a child throwing a tantrum, but there was no visible agitation from her.

Finally, Reft threw words to Mio.

He wanted to know the reason for her strange behavior.

“Don’t have a choice-desu wa. Because the revolver and walther are guns and the only thing I have that can cut is the one that can only cut konnyaku. Other than that, I only have my bare-hands” (Mio)

“… I don’t understand at all what you are saying” (Reft)

“The number of bullets is only 6 and 8, so in total there’s 14. The sword is limitless yes, but…” (Mio)

Mio is counting something with her fingers.

“Is it related to the reason why you aren’t giving up?” (Reft)

“Ara, walther still had one more shot?” (Mio)

“It was a mistake to try understanding huh. It’s fine already. I will let you continue until you die” (Reft)

“Hm, if I’m not mistaken, it still has for one more shot. Let’s shoot it this time” (Mio)

Mio points her left hand’s index finger and middle finger towards Reft.

“That again? For darkness element, it does have quite the power, but it already doesn’t work on—” (Reft)

The darkness bullet is shot from her hand and with a spiral rotation, it hits straight at Reft.

It certainly did hit.

But at that moment, the one who was send flying was Mio.

The attack that should have hit the left side of Reft's chest, for some reason, made a hole in Mio's chest.

"… No matter how many times I do it, it is amusing. It feels like it is something I wouldn't be able to copy at all-desu wa. Its weak point is that you have to do some incredibly complicated calculations before using it though" (Mio)

Mio stands up as if nothing happened.

The hole at her chest closed in an instant.

Reft's eyes open wide in surprise for who knows how many times already.

No, it seems he also reacted at the words of that girl.

"Seen through huh. Even so, what a frightening regenerating speed. You are without doubts not a hyuman. But if that's the case, why are you rebelling against Demon Lord-sama?" (Reft)

"I have shot them all, so if I just reload it, it will return to how it was before, right? Now then, the next 15 shots, will you be able to reflect them?" (Mio)

"It's useless. No matter how many times you do it—" (Reft)

"This is the only thing I will do-desu wa. As respect to you, I will not do anything aside from this. 'No matter how many times you do it', is what you said, but… no matter how many times-desu wa. In this fight, you still don't notice that this isn't something that places you in a superior position?" (Mio)

Mio giggles.

She does have more varied methods of battle.

But the three types of attacks that Reft dealt with, can be said to be

the most easy to comprehend states within the things Mio has learned in summer.

From the concept of guns she heard of Makoto, Mio has produced two famous guns with darkness bullets.

And then, the spell she used in the beginning that emits ki.

These were ideas that came from memories of Makoto from a certain anime which Mio likes.

She created her own type of rules and was having fun by bringing out these spells.

If the situation of the battle in Kaleneon were worse, Mio would have killed Reft without minding her methods.

But the situation in Kaleneon was overwhelming.

The one hundred of Asora were easily dominating the two thousand of the demon race.

The small reinforcements that were coming in succession from the vicinity were being scattered away.

In that case, Mio thought about grasping this mysterious art-like strategy if even for a bit.

That's right.

Just like how Reft analyzed Mio, Mio was also analyzing him.

And also, it wasn't as if Mio was standing up without giving up.

It's Reft who has no 'after'.

"What did you say?" (Reft)

"You continue your artistic-like reflection. The moment you are unable to continue doing it, that will be the moment of your defeat. The result outside has already been determined after all" (Mio)

"Impossible, there's no way we would lose in such a short amount

of time. You are spouting nonsense” (Reft)

“And you won’t be able to see its state. Well then, here I go” (Mio)

“Kugh… in that case, even if it’s only you, I will bring you down! Even you shouldn’t be able to infinitely regenerate! I will show you that I can return tens, hundreds of your attacks!” (Reft)

“If you stop defending them, you will die at that moment, you know? Do your best. If you continue for several thousand times more, you may have a chance of winning” (Mio)

The darkness bullet and the ki travel through a vaster area. Each time, a hole opens up in Mio’s body and she is smashed to the walls.

And yet, the attacks didn’t stop.

In the midst of this strange spectacle, the fight continues.

“Yareyare. Even so, it is rare to see Mio enjoying a fight. Is she intending to learn that reflecting ability? At my side there were only guys who showed no opposition” (Tomoe)

Peeping at Mio’s situation, Tomoe shrugs her shoulders at the summit of a hill.

The Highland Orc and Mist Lizard units were trampling down the enemy without mercy.

Thanks to that, Tomoe had nothing specially important to do.

There’s the choice of joining Mio’s fight, but from what Tomoe has seen, not only does she not need her help, she may even hate her for it, is what Tomoe thought.

“Fumu… there’s the option of going to where Waka is but… at this occasion… Let’s just do some miscellaneous work. If I just randomly split the land around the national border, it should decrease the trouble in the future. Putting a bridge won’t take that much trouble, so it would be better to have an easy to understand boundary. Umu, let’s do that” (Tomoe)

Tomoe's figure disappears from the hill.

At the place she disappeared from, there were heaps of corpses piled up.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

"Something that can hide your figure, is it?"

"Yeah. Because you know, if I go to Limia in this appearance, they would soon know that I am the merchant Raidou, right?" (Makoto)

"True" (Shiki)

"If that happens, all the effort Tomoe and everyone else did in Rotsgard will probably go poof. I don't think that Goddess will take into consideration those points after all" (Makoto)

"Since it has already come to this, I think it would be difficult" (Shiki)

"Shiki, you can just wear your previous form, right? You have done so before after all. Even though Tomoe and Mio said they were unable to. Shiki is truly skillful" (Makoto)

"… Yeah, you are right. I can manage with that but, what about Waka-sama?" (Shiki)

A mass of darkness that plunged into the capital.

Inside of it, I was consulting with Shiki.

Regarding the matter of hiding our appearance.

I didn't bring my mask, and going bare-faced would be bad.

But if I don't go out fast, I won't understand the situation.

I am greatly troubled by the fact that the Goddess didn't give me any time to prepare.

"Isn't there something?" (Makoto)

“If anything goes, I do have something though” (Shiki)

“In this occasion, anything is okay” (Makoto)

“Then, this” (Shiki)

“?!!! Why do you have something like that?!” (Makoto)

“Well I thought that throwing it away would be sad, so when Waka-sama threw it away, I picked it up” (Shiki)

“So unnecessary… No, in this case, should I call it: fine play?” (Makoto)

“It isn’t something bad after all” (Shiki)

What Shiki handed me is a long slender cylindrical-shaped thing.

The size is enough to fit in my palm.

It is something that Mio gave me in the past in moments of danger… a transformation item.

That’s right, a transformation item.

A crazy item that instantly equips you with a full-body suit like the ones from special effects heroes.

If this were sold in Japan, it might have been super popular.

In terms of power, it doesn’t match me so, in the end, I didn’t use it.

Or more like, after I pushed the button like they told me in Asora, I threw it away half in embarrassment and half in anger.

To think that Shiki picked it up.

… I have no choice but to use it huh.

If the hero is here, it would multiply my embarrassment though.

It’s a lot better than having my identity discovered.

I resolved myself and press the switch.

“Waka-sama, the wall will be released. Are you ready?” (Shiki)

“Okay… eh? The color is…” (Makoto)

“In the past it was blue, but this time is white huh. It looks like it doesn’t change the power that much though” (Shiki)

“White is… white is…” (Makoto)

White is kind of more embarrassing than the time it was blue.

That I can’t tell its power must mean that it is decreasing my defense and increasing my attack huh.

If it were the other way it would have been better.

In the first place, who the hell would do a transformation that decreases their defense?

Not that long after, just like how Shiki said, a big crack appears in the wall and breaks.

“Let’s go then” (Makoto)

“Yes, Waka-sama. I will do my all to protect you!” (Shiki)

Giving a side glance at Shiki who was showing quite the motivation, I do one step outside.

Not only Shiki, this time I am also here with the intention to fight.

In that sense, this might be my first battlefield.

Me in white clothes like a special effects bastard, and a skeleton wearing a black robe with golden embroidery drawn around it; both of us stepped into what is supposed to be a battlefield.

If there’s someone that saw us right now appearing in the battlefield, their eyes would be wide open.

Yeah, no doubt.

“…”

And just as I thought, several people were staring at us speechless.

The 4 armed giant that looks like he is from the giant race, is the one who is showing the most vigilance towards us.

Hm, is that someone from the demon race army?

There’s several people around that seem to be related to the demon race as well.

And also, there were a few hyumans only. It looks like they are fighting in a quite bad situation.

…

Hmph.

Even when just looking like this, I feel like supporting the demon side.

The so called Demon Lord-sama is quite the popular and has people that sympathize with him.

I silently felt respect towards the Lord of the demons that I haven’t met yet.

A so called Centaurus with half-hyuman, half-horse; a so called Minotaurus with half hyuman, half ox.

And also, a giant with 4 arms.

That giant is probably the boss.

In other words, the demon’s side is composed of demi-humans and mamonos, and its general is not a demon but a giant. Meaning that they are sorted out by demi-humans and mamonos.

Even if the demon race is also a category of demi-human, this is impressive.

In the hyuman armies, the demi-humans are only used as disposable

vanguards.

I also thought that their way of thinking is quite advanced.

As long as I am here fulfilling the promise, I have to take the side of the hero though.

Hah…

“The hero is… there huh” (Makoto)

From the positioning, I estimate the person that is supposed to be the hero.

…

What impressive attire.

The exposure rate is crazy.

It’s like I am looking at an extreme cosplay.

Hm?

… Eh?

“Could it be… no way” (Makoto)

“Waka-sama?” (Shiki)

“President Otonashi? Is it you, senpai?” (Makoto)

An injured girl that is looking at us.

That person who is probably the hero, has an attire that even in this world it is not normally seen, and holding a sword. That appearance is…

No, even if I say it looks exactly the same, if she is a hero, then she is from the same world as mine.

Tsukuyomi-sama also said it, that one of them was quite close.

She is a senpai from high school at my previous world. A famous person in my hometown.

In terms of connection with her, I have only talked a few times with her regarding the budget of the club. She looks like the student council president.

Senpai is… the hero?

I unintentionally mutter her name in a low tone.

Forgetting that I was currently in a battlefield, I motionlessly watch that figure of hers.

Chapter 155: Participation of the Devil ④

Is that really senpai?

I do want to confirm it, but that will be for later.

If it were the usual me and that is actually my senpai, it wouldn't be strange to wave my hand and talk to her in this type of reunion.

It is like coincidentally meeting with an acquaintance while travelling abroad.

Even so, I was able to arrange my thoughts because of the atmosphere in this place.

I once again look at the place I have descended to.

We are probably at the audience room of the king or something like that.

It has a space that fits the bill, and in the place that seemed to be the highest spot in this location and most likely where the throne was in, there's a wreckage.

There's signs of destruction here and there pointing out at an intense battle. Most of the people here are injured.

The only ones who look fine at glance are the small girl in the hero party and… the Giant who exudes personality.

Looks like the Goddess has thrown me right in the middle of the battlefield, as per usual.

"Waka-sama, the hero is probably that person there. Should we begin by safeguarding her? " (Shiki)

With a small voice, Shiki asks me.

… This is bad. If he calls me by Raidou or by Waka, I feel like my identity could be guessed.

Even so, as long as ‘that person’ is here, Makoto is also no good.

Should I increase my names?

There’s a limit to how troublesome that would be.

Moreover, in this white attired state, I don’t think I will be using that name in the future at all anyways, so maybe it is fine.

“Shiki, when talking to me, there’s no need to call my name, just state your business. No matter what you call me, my identity might be exposed after all” (Makoto)

“That’s true. Understood… Then, just in this occasion, I will call you master. About me… please call me Larva. If you call me Shiki, it might be exposed after all” (Shiki)

“Larva is a name Rona knew. Is that okay?” (Makoto)

“That woman doesn’t think that I am actually serving under Waka-sama. In that case, I am thinking about using that misunderstanding. For those kind of people, instead of a far off lie, it is more effective to use this” (Shiki)

“I leave it to you. For now, I want to test if I can actually use common language, so I will step forward and go to where the hero is. The demon general… well, from what I see, it looks okay” (Makoto)

“… Is that so. Understood” (Shiki)

“I will probably have Shiki move A LOT later, so for now, just wait” (Makoto)

“I appreciate the consideration” (Shiki)

My head is still a bit heavy.

If with this I am still unable to speak common language, I won't be able to bear it.

Looking at the skeleton that is slightly hanging down his head as if disappointed, I implicitly tell him that he will have his turn later.

Because in truth, it felt like that's how it would turn out to be.

In this embarrassing attire, the magic power is being confined inside, so I don't need to use [Sakai] to conceal it.

That's why I am able to use [Sakai] for perception and area understanding after a long time.

If we put aside the part about looking like a special effects hero cosplay, this is equipment that would fit me the most in my everyday life.

But that one bad point is the biggest reason why I can't use it for everyday life, so there's no point though.

"!!"

"…"

I begin to walk towards the place where the hero and the giant are confronting each other with about 10 meters of distance between them.

When I began moving, tension ran through them. And they mutually, no, they were both staring at me.

The distance between them and me is around 50 meters.

Of course, I was taking into consideration their movements as well.

While keeping my perception [Sakai] to a level where I don't lack in details, I expand the domain of my [Sakai].

From the castle to the town, I watch the battles that appear in my mind and are occurring in several locations while I grasp the topography.

Looks like I can do it now.

The composition of the demon race forces are, as expected, demi-humans, mamonos, and also demons.

There's no real inclination, but the demons are slightly fewer.

The equipment is quite good and it really does feel like a soldier.

Also, the points of battle are really easy to tell.

It looks like the invasion points are all aiming at the castle.

Is it to secure the entry paths or are the battles concentrating in a long and narrow isosceles triangle area with the castle at its summit?

I have mostly understood the information in the vicinity.

I will decrease the precision and increase the scope.

To the point that I can't tell the races of the people here, I was able to reach until the outer walls of the capital.

I see… the demon race even destroyed the walls huh.

Looks like they have some incredible weapon or magic.

It seems that's the base for the triangle area.

The number in the demon's side is… it is probably because it is a surprise attack but, it looks like there's several thousands.

In terms of numbers, the ones protecting the Kingdom are many more.

Just that, this isn't a fight in a plain or with military formations, so if there isn't a difference of 10 or 20 times, it might not be a decisive difference.

It is out of the question to have less people at the attacking side, but the demon race that has invaded into the town have already taken relatively solid mobilization, so for the Kingdom side that is

dispersed like crazy, they are probably being faced with an attack as if piercing their stomach.

Looking at the fires occurring around the locations that are not in the march's course, a cooperator of the demon race or a spy might have been infiltrated.

In Rotsgard, the incident occurred from the inside after all.

"Looks like Limia intends to abandon the capital temporarily. Units are gathering at the outsides, so maybe they are going to encircle the capital?" (Makoto)

"… For the hard-headed Limia Kingdom, that's quite the flexible choice. Is this the influence of the hero?" (Shiki)

Again, I talk with Shiki in a small voice that can't be heard on the other side.

I have already reduced the precision to the point that I can only tell how many people are gathered and expanded the scope in a breath.

I could tell that a mass of people are coming from the several towns in the vicinity and were heading towards the capital.

I felt that, in contrary, the people in at the capital were trying to leave, so I thought that maybe they are aiming for encirclement.

Shiki looked like he was slightly surprised, but I could tell that a battle aura was coming out from his whole body.

It has an overpowering sensation that would make anyone who has a weak heart to faint.

Also, everytime he talks, his dark red light for eyes flicker, so the intensity doubles.

Fortunately, my expression can't be seen. I turn my face forward while making a wry smile.

"I don't know who you are but, stop"

The giant gives me a warning.

A voice filled with dignity fitting his appearance.

Also, as expected, he is big.

Even with only one finger of his, it would make an arm of mine.

But I didn't stop.

Because I can't protect the hero from here.

"…"

The hero's side is still silent.

If I could hear her voice, I would be able to tell if it's senpai or not though.

If it's really senpai, I will have to change my plan into a slightly gentler one for the hero.

No matter what, doing terrible things to my senpai is a bit, you know.

The giant, seeing that I showed no reaction and continued walking, send a glance towards his surroundings.

They were still lying in ambush. The soldiers that were hidden appeared from the pillars at the sides and charged towards us.

If the person ignores the warning, it is immediate elimination.

As expected.

I can tell that the hero is gulping her breath.

So she didn't know about this huh.

For me, they were enemies I already perceived with [Sakai].

This wasn't a surprise attack or anything of the sorts.

From up, down, and the sides; from each direction, 4 attacks were directed at us.

It wasn't at the same time, but those movements show coordination.

I can tell they have been trained.

"…"

As if holding me back from doing something, Shiki silently moves.

In his hand, there's a pitch black staff.

It isn't the one he uses at the Academy.

Because there's no gem that is said to be completely necessary for a magician's staff. That's why I told him not to use this one at the Academy.

In terms of appearance, instead of a staff, it is more like… a rod.

I am not used to moving in this suit so, well, it can't be helped. I will let Shiki have this one.

"I finally have the chance to be of use in battle. I will give you my thanks, weaklings. Depart painlessly" (Shiki)

A cold voice.

At the same time Shiki says this, he lightly taps the lower end of his staff to the floor.

Shiki really does like activating his spells like this huh.

Immediately following, the two winged people that were coming at us from above, both explode at the same time.

Just like that, he soundlessly moves towards my right side where a black clothed demon is.

Taking out a blade from the designless staff, Shiki cuts off his neck.

It isn't the spear-shaped blade he normally uses, but a giant curved

blade.

A giant scythe huh.

Since his appearance is that of a skeleton, it is totally a death reaper.

The last one changed his aim from Shiki to me, he changed the stance of his sword to a stabbing one and lunged at me.

Will Shiki make it in time?

It was an unnecessary worry.

In front of my face that was facing the side, the back of Shiki was reflected.

Even though he is good at this kind of short range instantaneous movement, I wonder why it gets harder the longer the distance?

I thought he would be more fit for this kind of thing than even Mio, but it seems Shiki is not good at teleporting in long distances.

Well then, the last one…

The one who is being held by the skeletic hand at her head and being lifted up is… a black skinned Elf-looking person.

She has a hood, so I can't really tell.

Is this what they call a dark elf?

The sword she held struck around the sternum of Shiki and broke.

Her figure while still holding her broken sword that couldn't accomplish its task, was tragic.

"Gugh…"

Those were her last words.

The important portion that molded life was sucked by Shiki. In an instant, she was bleached white and died.

Wiped out without doubt.

I nodded once and resume my steps silently.

Shiki lightly brushes off the dust and follows after me.

The hero side and the demon race side.

In time, we arrive.

“You won’t mind… considering you an enemy, right?”

The words of the giant.

It seems he is asking me, but he is already filled with hostility.

“… Are you an ally?”

The words of the hero.

… As I thought, she is really senpai huh.

In the voice I have heard before, I make a small sigh.

Why is she in this kind of place?

With no discomfort, she would have been able to live her life stably in a practically tranquil manner.

Thanks to Mio’s strangely detailed work, my voice is changed.

In this kind of appearance, it is practically impossible to recognize me, but if I ask her: ‘why did you come to this world?’ she will most likely grow suspicious.

Right now I am an enigmatic character, and there’s merit in having my identity unknown.

It isn’t something I want to ask at the risk of exposing myself.

I was indeed interested, but I didn’t voice it out.

“Through an agreement with the Goddess, I will safeguard the hero.

Also, the demon race should abandon Stella Fort at once and take shelter. If it's with your side's thought transmission skills, you should be able to communicate with them" (Makoto)

"So you really are an enemy huh. I have never seen that appearance before. Is that ancient equipment, or could it be, judging from your voice, are you some type of golem? So the Goddess still had more pawns"

The giant has regarded me as an enemy and takes his stance.

The glossy black skin of his that looks like obsidian, shows flexible movement. He takes the stance of a martial artist.

Is his hand-to-hand combat?

At his four arms he has equipped gauntlets, no, it reaches close to his shoulders, so it is probably more accurate to call it an order-made arm gauntlet.

"That's a misunderstanding, giant. I don't hold the will to be hostile towards the demon race. If you guys leave this place and abandon Stella Fort, I promise you that I won't let the hyumans pursue you" (Makoto)

"Can't do that. I will eliminate the hero here. My subordinates fighting in this capital and I have come here for that purpose. We also have no reason to abandon Stella Fort"

"Even the orcs are not pillaging and violating women. Leaving aside their skills, if you have a force that is this well trained, it would be a big loss for the demon race if you were to lose them, right?" (Makoto)

"It's strange to be praised by the enemy, but for now, I will say thank you. But between losing my forces and abandoning our objective, the level is just totally different. The two conditions you have mentioned are not things I can accept in no way"

He isn't attacking me in my no-stance state.

Instead of calling it the spirit of a military man, it is most likely that

he is trying to measure me.

This person is a military man and a soldier as well.

And for some reason, I knew what he is currently by instinct.

“That’s regrettable. The demon race’s army has demi-humans and mamonos without any discrimination. Honestly, I think your thinking is a lot more advanced than that of hyumans. You have a disciplined army. I feel like you are worthy of respect” (Makoto)

“… It’s regrettable for me too. The fact that someone who has that kind of thoughts is a vanguard of the Goddess, that is. No matter how many races we include, we are the sword of Demon Lord-sama. The sword that our Lord swings must be filled with dignity and awe. Vulgar behavior will only dirty that sword and will only deduct the worth of that Lord and its country”

He probably still has spare energy to resume battle.

The giant looks like he doesn’t wants to speak anymore.

“So you are trying to finish it in one swing?” (Makoto)

“That’s right. Our Lord says that it will shoulder all our actions. In that case, no matter if we end up breaking in fragments after one swing… we will certainly destroy our enemy. If we can’t do that, we won’t be able to answer its trust. Your proposal is rejected. Move aside. If you are going to cover the hero, I will have to destroy you as well. If you are able to think that much, you should have noticed the darkness under the rule of the Goddess as well”

“I have received my payment in advance. I think this is a villainous role, but in this occasion, I will be standing at the hero’s side. Even if it’s a promise with a person that I don’t feel any speck of trust, I don’t want to break it” (Makoto)

“That’s regrettable. In that case, I will be bringing down both you and the hero. My name is Io. Demon General Io” (Io)

“…”

“You won’t name yourself huh. Fuh… but to think that I would be interfered twice in killing Hibiki by a white person. Is this what they call the destiny of the hero?” (Io)

As I thought, it is settled, she is senpai.

I don’t remember the name of the Empire hero either, but he had a japanese-like name and Japan is super popular in parallel worlds.

Maybe he is doing this as substitute for a greeting, Io pushes out his fist.

Placing a small quantity of strength in my lower half, I stop it with my left hand.

“You stopped it?!” (Hibiki)

The surprised voice of senpai resonates from my back.

If we consider the difference in heights, it would certainly look abnormal.

“Limia’s hero-san. Along with her companions, Larva, place them by your side and take them away” (Makoto)

“From what you have said, it felt like you weren’t an ally but… is it okay to believe in you?” (Hibiki)

“Of course. I won’t let them put a finger on you. Larva” (Makoto)

“Yes” (Shiki)

“Io is crazy strong. Don’t try fighting him in strength, not even by error. This is advice from a defeated person that couldn’t compare in technique” (Hibiki)

“I will take it as reference” (Makoto)

I will probably be competing in strength though.

I stop the other attack of the giant with my right hand.

“How can you do that with that body?! But!” (Io)

“I see, I don’t have enough arms” (Makoto)

“That’s how it is!!” (Io)

I can feel a dull and distant impact from my flank.

And while at it, another attack hit my chin in between the space of the thick arm.

How skillful.

But that’s not enough.

His strength that is.

“WA?!”

“Your reaction is fast, but you see…” (Makoto)

Noticing that his attack isn’t showing the desired amount of power, Io immediately jumps back.

As if matching him, I chase after him.

If it’s the agitated Io, I might be able to hit him at least once.

“Guugh?!”

Entering to his bosom, I turn my back from him.

Just like that, I make a turn and do a backhand chop.

It was perfectly guarded by the four arms.

But it looks like there was some damage.

“… The backhand chop of a Dragon Slayer” (Makoto)

“It is scary that you don’t sound like you are joking. There’s no way you are a Rose Sign as well but… you might be more fun than Hibiki” (Io)

I am half serious you know.

Releasing his guard, Io looks at me with cold eyes as if raging.

Now then, enhanced attack power, lowered defensive power; in this kind of state, will it bring good fortune or will it bring bad fortune?

Even when I am in a battlefield, my thoughts are simple, but can stay composed.

How mysterious.

Just by having a change of motivation, it feels this different.

I might even be more relaxed than in my time I was teaching at the Academy.

I once again place myself in front of Io who is looking for an opportunity.

My battle in the Limia capital has begun.

Chapter 156: Participation of the Devil ⑤

I have lost again.

I have certainly gotten stronger than before, and this time I even had location advantage.

Everyone had become stronger with the equipment obtained at Tsige.

The way of thinking and fighting of the adventurers that came with us from Limia have also been a good influence to the Kingdom's army.

It was for me too.

It isn't to the level of Mio-san and Beren-san who I met at the remote region, but there were a lot of things I learned.

It wasn't just skill at hand-to-hand combat.

I also began acting towards breaking down the fetters of the nobles that have been clotted, the discomforting politics.

It would be one thing if it were after bringing down Stella Fort, but in the current state, the position of the capital is quite dangerous, and I thought that each noble held way too much power in military affairs.

In that aspect, I have shown a relative amount of results.

Repeating careful talk with the heirs of the next generation, I was able to focus their attention in the view that the Kingdom's current way is wrong.

It wasn't like the objective was a rebellion against the royal family,

and I can't just create a big civil war in the middle of our war against the demon race, so right now I am just stopping it at only awareness in reformation.

The second son of the Hopelace who are high nobles and yet are very close to the royal family.

The fact that Ilum-kun approved this proposal of mine in an early stage allowed me to move smoothly and it was also a big help.

I think that in the future I will be asking for his cooperation too.

Facing the plan to bring down Stella, I felt like I was doing everything I could.

And yet…

Not only were we unable to defend against Io's surprise attack, we were pushed back. We let them reach till the audience room.

I intended to run away, but after coming this far, it was difficult.

I honestly can tell that it would be hard to leave the castle and escape the town with Io chasing after us.

And I don't know how much damage our surroundings would take because of this.

In the end, I chose to settle this in an early stage with the support barrier of the audience room.

Using the Minotaurus and the Centaurus that Io said he brought from the border's wasteland, Bredda was completely shut out, and I was forced to fight with him in a one on one.

With Wudi's support attacks, Chiya's healing support, and also the support barrier of the audience room, furthermore, the silver band which Horn dwells in, and the sword Beren-san made for me.

Even if it's against Io who has already turned black and going at full-power, I thought I would be able to confront him.

Right now, in front of my eyes, there's a white guy that suddenly bursted in and joined the fight.

I felt like shouting: what kind of joke is this?!

That guy had an attire like one of those daily special effect heroes. He stopped an attack of Io right from the front, and while receiving two of those attacks, he made Io step back and gave one attack to him.

I felt like an idiot for warning him to not compete with Io in strength.

He is strong.

And quite strong at that.

His moves are not that good, but the white guy has already deployed a pretty high-ranked enhancing magic and fighting in close quarter combat against Io.

For me who knows about special effect heroes, his appearance is quite embarrassing, but he is defending against the attacks of Io precisely.

Physical strength and speed; in my eyes, it looks like the basic specs of him are higher than Io's.

And in another aspect, the body movements and technique are higher in Io.

… Well, in terms of attires, I don't have the right to say much about others.

I take a look at my own body.

There's no wound that can be considered a wound.

I have already used my own healing magic and I had Chiya heal me

as well.

I have quite the amount of physical and mental fatigue, but I will have to hold it down with willpower.

I am practically naked, so I can tell that I don't have any sort of scars.

It's embarrassing, but this is necessary to display my best performance so… I can't just not do it.

In the resonance with my guardian spirit Horn, I always end up in this appearance so it can't be helped.

A strenuous skill that lets me clad the silver band and Horn at the same time.

Different from possession, my will doesn't get inhibited in any way. It is uncomfortable that I end up in a state as if wearing a risque fur-made string swimsuit. The defensive field that it creates is slightly superior to the equipment the dwarf Beren-san made for me.

To fight against the blackened Io, it was necessary to have the power and speed of this form.

It wasn't the moment to say that gravure would be a lot better.

That's why I had to do it.

He is not an opponent that a normal bluff would work on, so I perform the weakness I showed in the past and tried to lure some sort of opening.

It was practically useless though.

I was somehow able to do some effective attacks in my starting dash, but with his usual regeneration, it was all made into zero again.

That's right, this sword.

As expected, Mio-san and Beren-san are incredible.

The moment they made this sword for me, I could tell that those two had already seen through my specialty.

A great sword that had its wind power sealed, in the past.

In Io's battle, I finally realized the power of this.

With an inhuman voice, the sword called me.

Just like how it asked me, I forcefully controlled the power that the sword emitted.

I didn't unify with the sword like I did with Horn, it was as if I was doing a competition of power with the sword.

An ear-piercing metallic sound rang in my ears several times, and the great sword compressed into the size of the bastard sword I used in the past.

The originally transparent emerald green sword blade became more pronounced and the degree of transparency decreased.

In exchange, the power of the wind was felt even stronger.

It's not to understand the weapon; the condition for activation is to thirst for power and make the power obey. I felt like it was a latent disposition with bad specifications and I felt grudge welling up.

But its power was tremendous.

Just by holding it, my power increased by several times and my senses became sharper.

The sharpness also increased remarkably and I was able to cut even the blackened Io.

If I used my specialty attacks that harbor the fire element, the wind element increased its power by even more. If I endowed an element in the sword, the fire would not be red but became an emerald green that looked as if it gushed out from the blade of the sword.

In the past I wasn't blessed with a good weapon, but now I was being brandished by the weapon itself, is what I felt like bantering about. It had such a high efficiency that I even felt uncomfortable.

The wind element boosts the fire element.

Beren-san must have thought that, going by my of fighting, instead of a fire weapon, it would be better to use a wind element one.

Io was unable to catch up with my speed and I was able to continuously attack him. 'With this, I have won', is what I thought at that moment.

And yet…

Becoming black wasn't his trump card.

Those big gauntlets that were equipped on his arms that served as weapons as well as armor… those were his trump card.

That he didn't use them last time, was it because at that time they still weren't made?

Each one of the 4 gauntlets had one of the 4 main elements: fire, water, earth and wind. Even when it is simple, he cladded elements in his attacks.

Wind with earth; my movements were restricted.

Water with fire; my attacks were weakened.

If he didn't have those, I would have been able to decide the battle before he got 'used' to my attacks.

It was only a single pattern he read from me.

From there, I received a counter, and Io, without defending against the follow-ups of Wudi and Chiya-chan's spells, he received those

attacks with his body while approaching me, and I received a combo attack that felt as if my body was being torn to shreds.

Counting the kick, I received a combo of probably 7 attacks.

The rapid fire of Wudi that disregarded his remaining magic, created a smokescreen, and I had Chiya-chan heal me.

When I reached the state where I can make arias myself, I added my own regeneration spell.

In the moment Wudi's magic power was sacrificed by quite a lot and our force had diminished, the situation showed a change.

A black mass with slight golden light clad on it, plunged onto the audience room from the sky.

In front of us, a sinister skeleton and a white guy that looked like a special effect hero appeared.

He ignored the words of Io and drew closer and the skeleton easily took care of the ambush troops that we didn't even notice.

After saying something vague that I couldn't understand if he was an enemy or an ally, the skeleton led me and my comrades to lean on a wall.

It is probably a subordinate of that white guy, but I was silently looking at the fight between the white guy and Io.

The skeleton didn't show any signs of entering to help.

It seems like he affixed a field of some sort around us, but it doesn't look like he is doing anything aside from that.

It is certainly true that the white guy is fighting Io in a more than advantageous way, but I have to question that skeleton's action of not even providing support.

"He is… not your master? Is it okay to stay here without going to help him?" (Hibiki)

“… No problem. If it’s only at that level, supporting him would only serve as an hindrance. Hero… Hibiki, was it? That weapon, is it something you obtained in Tsige?” (Shiki)

“What’s with that so suddenly?” (Hibiki)

“I just thought that it is most likely a weapon from Kuzunoha Company” (Shiki)

“You know them?!” (Hibiki)

“Only slightly. It is more like, I have have a past connection with that material” (Shiki)

“Material?” (Hibiki)

“Yeah, there was an experimental subject that I had it eat a wind spirit. It resembles the sickle of it” (Shiki)

“… T-That was a mamono you made?! Or more like, it was used as a raw material for this?!” (Hibiki)

“Well, that doesn’t matter right now. That just means it was an individual that served only as a mere material after all” (Shiki)

“… So you say. Just who in the world are you?” (Hibiki)

“Larva. Experiment loving and former Lich. Hey, that magician and knight over there. Don’t move. Stay there” (Shiki)

The skeleton that named himself Larva stopped Bredda and Wudi who were trying to stand up, while he talked to me.

Wudi still hasn’t recovered his magic power properly.

I do think that it is still impossible for him to resume his actions.

But…

I knew the reason why.

At the line of sight of those two, there’s two enemies.

The Centaurus and the Minotaurus.

As expected from enemies native of the wasteland, they are strong.

At this situation, I should be the one going.

I can already move my body after all.

“Hero, you as well. Stay there” (Shiki)

“Can’t you see the enemy? Against that level of enemy, I wouldn’t even take 3 minutes. Just leave it to me” (Hibiki)

“… Don’t misunderstand. I am not giving advice nor am I asking for an opinion. I am ordering you” (Shiki)

“Quite the words there. I am grateful for your help, but this is also something that benefits you too, right?” (Hibiki)

I take my sword in hand and stand up.

It’s not at the quality of that white guy, but even so, to use standard enhancing magic exhausts quite a lot of magic power.

Slightly feeling that my strength was giving away, I place the spell again.

The weakness is that it is easy to cancel if I lower my concentration.

But its effect is balanced, so for someone like me who has a lot of magic power, this is a magic that fits me.

“If there’s even a slight chance that you will be wounded, there will only be disadvantages for me. Sit down. Be silent and don’t move” (Shiki)

A tone of voice from the former Lich that didn’t forgive any objection.

It seems like these guys are not enemies but they are not our allies either.

“I will finish it quickly” (Hibiki)

“If you leave the field, I will kill your companions” (Shiki)

“?!”

“In the agreement we exchanged with the Goddess, there was nothing mentioning the safety of your companions. As long as you are okay, I don’t care about what happens to the other hyumans” (Shiki)

What a thing he is saying.

Just what was the Goddess thinking when he brought this kind of people to the capital?

I can’t feel any sort of joke in his words.

At the very least, I could tell that he doesn’t feel anything for the life of hyumans.

“… In that case, what are we going to do? See, they are coming!” (Hibiki)

“I will do it. You guys should just silently wait here” (Shiki)

“You bastard, there’s a limit to rudeness—” (Bredda)

“Bredda-dono, let’s leave things here to this personage. Increasing our enemies in this state is a bad move” (Wudi)

Wudi holds back Bredda who couldn’t endure it anymore and was going to complain to Larva.

It’s certainly true. This is not the time to be increasing our enemies.

As long as we have decided to fight Io, we have to speedily drive out the demons attacking the capital.

For that sake, I would have to steal the march on Larva somehow, but…

“Then, I will be seeing what you got. The power of Larva-dono, please show it to me” (Hibiki)

I decided to send slight sarcasm to him.

It's true that this Larva is strong.

That instantaneous movement and the speed of his spell activation, the weapon he holds is not normal either.

In terms of magic power, Wudi is lower than Chiya-chan and me, but just like in levels, the magic power doesn't completely decide the skills of a magician.

That Centaurus and Minotaurus are not normal enemies.

If it's me, I would be able to push them back with overwhelming speed, but just how will the most likely-magician Larva fight?

Let me see it.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

A big frame ox faced warrior swings down his battle axe.

Fumu, is this a demi-human, or a mamono?

It is kinda… interesting.

If I meet another one in the future, let's check it up.

Because I stepped back and avoided it, the axe hits the floor and it left slight damage on it.

What an excellent support barrier.

If it were average, fragments would have scattered and the floor would have been splendidly gouged.

"And you use a bow huh" (Shiki)

I slap down the shot arrow with my staff.

The Centaurus is a demi-human and quite the prideful race.

It seems there's many who choose bows and spears, and it seems

this one has chosen the bow.

A vanguard and a rear guard; their roles are properly set.

As expected, these two are stronger than the ambush troops from before huh.

“Io-sama is fighting. We can’t just stand and do nothing. Move aside, Lich”

“You have shown us your power, but that level won’t work against us”

“… I don’t like showing more power than necessary after all. Sorry for that. Master said that he would be giving me my turn later. In that case, I will be using you guys as warm up” (Shiki)

Fufu.

Those so called warriors are really easy to utilize by using their pride.

Their temperament clearly changed.

“Very well. You are without doubt an obstacle that has defeated our brethren as well”

“I already know your power to a certain extent. In our home, you would be treated as a troublesome livestock” (Shiki)

“!!”

“Fool. Just what benefit would it bring you to anger us?”

“Who knows Horses would be too frail for us to mount after all. I don’t know much about you. Sorry” (Shiki)

“!!!”

The Minotaurus and the Centaurus heat up in an amusing manner.

Well then, let’s begin.

“I was a former Lich you see. Why I am ‘former’, I will show you here” (Shiki)

I finish my aria. I release the spell that is suited for me from within me.

“How long will you accompany me for? I am looking forward to knowing. ‘Thirteen stepping-stones’” (Shiki)

The moment I became a servant of Waka-sama, I was embedded an uncontrollable amount of power inside of me.

I assimilated it, but it is a power that is not mine.

I have finally been able to change, not everything, into my power.

You guys are my first prey.

Inside of me, it has been sleeping, changing, and has awakened.

… the power of Waka-sama’s rings that is.

“From the first step to the fourth, release. ‘Wand’, ‘Sword’, ‘Cup’, ‘Coin’” (Shiki)

“Gugh!!”

“This is?!”

I won’t say 4 times, but I can tell that a magic power close to that is sprung out to the surroundings.

I can tell there’s a different nature of magic power raging about in my body.

This sensation that enlarges my maximum amount of magic power is peculiar.

I look at my left hand.

There, I see 4 rings dyed in crimson red in all the fingers aside from the pinky finger.

Power wells up as well.

Until the fourth step there's: magic empowerment, body enhancement, magic power enhancement, equipment enhancement.

Until this level, I am able to utilize it without any risks.

Depending on the situation, I would want to release higher steps, but that is slightly harsh.

"You guys are also stirred up because your superior is there right? Try to struggle a bit, okay?" (Shiki)

I prepare my staff.

The two instantly take defensive stances.

Directly below them, several floor-turned-spears thrust upwards.

I have to properly utilize the support barrier after all.

"Hoh~, the horse evaded it huh. The ox… it seems he has endured it" (Shiki)

The Centaurus shoots an arrow towards me.

In the middle of its way, it splitted up and rained down.

The Forest Oni Akua does something similar to this.

"Burn" (Shiki)

Instead of magic, I used a special soul language to forcibly activate a spell.

I changed all the arrows into dust.

"This magiciaaan!!"

This time is the Minotaurus.

Yareyare.

Can’t see the difference in power yet?

At the battle axe that was swung down obliquely, I purposely don’t take a defensive position and decide to take it.

“Impossible”

The axe stops at the tip of my shoulder.

My magic power, equipment and even my physical body has increased in power.

I don’t even need to defend against this kind of attack.

“Well then, it is my turn now, right?” (Shiki)

I prepare my black staff and begin an aria.

While looking at the expression of despair from both of them, I finished the remainder of my spell.

“Don’t worry, it won’t hurt. That life, offer it up” (Shiki)

Chapter 157: The Devil's change, the awakening of the hero, an intruder appears

"… Oh, they are flying~. If it's that level of enemy, he should be able to easily defeat them though" (Makoto)

"To look somewhere else! Is that supposed to be leeway?!" (Io)

After saying so, an attack with no showiness came at me.

I cross my arms and stop Io's fist.

"Nah, I am fighting hand-to-hand against an enemy that surpasses me in skill. I have no leeway at all" (Makoto)

"So you say. An enemy that my attacks are not connecting properly is saying that he has no leeway" (Io)

"You as well. There's been 6 in total counting the ambush troops. Your subordinates are dying one after the other. Don't you care?" (Makoto)

While stepping back, I evade several attacks coming my way.

The Minotaurus and the Centaurus have both turned into dust.

It seems Shiki activated the rings aware that it was overkill.

From what I see, it is the four basic ones.

"… Everyone that came here attacking the Kingdom were all prepared. To feel for their deaths would be an insult to them" (Io)

"Death soldiers huh. Even though this isn't a period novel" (Makoto)

I remember the word ‘prepare for red’.

A kick huh.

Even though he is a giant, he is truly skillful.

A technical giant doesn’t match the image I have, but this demon general Io, even in my eyes, I can tell that he possesses excellent martial arts skill.

He may even be an expert.

This is the first ‘properly big guy’ I have met in this world, so it leaves quite the impression.

I even feel like killing him would be a loss for the world.

“Suffer for the death of your soldiers huh. As expected, an opponent hard to deal with. But!” (Io)

Magic power from the gauntlets?

The fist of Io which I was unable to stop in time, had fire spouting out of it.

Ooh～.

“An equipment with element endowed in it huh. Impressive” (Makoto)

An equipment that even a warrior would be able to use with a strong endowed element is valuable.

It’s even said that a hyuman blacksmith wouldn’t be able to make one.

Not only is it a wasted treasure for a person who has a relative amount of knowledge in magic, it is also, obviously, high priced.

It is a lot more economic to endow an element depending on the situation by using magic, it requires lower level of magic, and it is requested more often.

So this giant can use magic to a higher than average level.

“Even if you say that, not only did you say it as if it was nothing, you weren’t even send flying!” (Io)

Even when entering at point blank range, his techniques still show.

In all this twisting and spinning at close range, he still manages to add up strikes.

To be able to see this incredible technique so close, I am deeply moved.

“Hmph, I won’t receive that one!” (Io)

Io kicks away my pushed out fist.

Even though I did that with my small body and in point blank range.

I basically have better physical strength and speed than him, but it is still like this.

Can’t be helped.

Let’s repeat the steps and take distance from him.

“A warning and a confirmation. Do you have no intentions… to withdraw?” (Makoto)

“Of course. I also have no intentions to continue prolonging this fight” (Io)

I am an enemy after all.

Even if it’s a person I have respect for, if I am fighting him in a battlefield…

I don’t have any choice but to kill him huh.

It it were the usual me, I would have thought of a different way.

Why can I take a decision like this so easily?

Is it because of some evil addition from the Goddess when she was giving me the common language? Or is it something else?

My head is serene.

Thoughts fit for battle are being created by my head.

… It is really, comfortable.

“I see” (Makoto)

“Come at me seriously. I am not so simple as to be dealt with without showing your real power” (Io)

Right, if it’s this person…

No.

It’s not necessary to show my real power.

I can kill him even in this form.

To both fight at full power… why did I think about such a ‘useless’ thing?

How stupid.

In the future I may have to fight senpai, no, the heroes.

There’s no need to show it.

This is plenty enough.

“Looks like you are not at your full power either. Then I will keep you company” (Makoto)

Should I randomly use the powers that Mio attached to this?

Just by going like this and prolonging it, it would be checkmate for the demon race.

In that case, it would be better to not show my real power and just half-heartedly do this.

It's the most efficient way and I won't be showing my cards to the hero.

It will also match my objective of protecting the hero, and if I just have Rona get wind of the warning I made towards Stella Fortress, there won't be any problems.

Right.

I should also have Shiki move and reduce the amount of damage to the town.

It might be a bit boring for Shiki to do a job like buying time, but right now he has the most suitable power for it.

"Larva, half-release the seventh step" (Makoto)

Shiki's power has an incredible power in dealing with varying situations.

There's points like not being able to release it unless he has until the fourth step activated, and that he can't activate more than one or two others. And if he changes them in the moment, he is able to advantageously fight against most opponents.

If he trains those weak points, he will be able to conquer them in given time, so a day might come where he is able to turn all that power to his own and release them all at the same time.

Shiki bows, giving me the sign of his positive response.

Then me as well.

Let's fight in a deserving manner.

To fight seriously in this form means that after all.

I will probably… be able to kill him.

◇◆◇◆ Io Pov ◇◆◇◆

A sinister power is gathering at the fingers of the Lich.

He continues an incantation that hurts my ears.

If possible, I would like to interfere with it, but sadly, the thing in front of me won't let me do so.

I know the basics of how to move my body, but I don't have experience in martial arts.

This is my diagnosis.

Although, from what I heard of the name, this martial art technique is most likely only known by a part of the demon race and the demi-humans.

The hyumans normally prefer to use weapons instead of learning techniques to move their body after all.

I have also heard that it is hard to bestow the blessing of the Goddess to people who train in bare-handed combat.

It is not like the people who don't like the Goddess will develop in this path.

… Seriously.

Being intruded by these unknown people and having to fight them. A soldier really doesn't have it easy.

I miss a little those times when I fought as a common soldier in the way I desired.

"When you say full power, do you mean being supported by that Lich there?" (Io)

"By no means. I have mostly understood the state of the battlefield already, so I am just having him buy time" (Makoto)

"!! You have that much power, and you still don't intend to fight properly huh. I thought your ideology was close to ours, but it seems it was my misunderstanding" (Io)

That's right.

In the beginning, from this white guy's way of speaking and thinking, I thought he was similar to us.

But after the fight began, I felt like he had some sort of… gap.

As if he were changing into something else while we were clashing. A strange sensation.

At first, I felt honesty and drive in those fists, but now I feel coldness. I even felt like it was devoid of emotion.

It is rare to encounter an opponent that changes this much in the middle of battle.

If it's now, I would be able to agree if they told me he was a golem, but well…

"Our objective is the safety of the hero and Stella Fort's capitulation. That's it. I don't have any real problems in prolonging the battle. To pointlessly show my cards in a situation where I don't know who will be hostile against me, that's only plain foolishness" (Makoto)

The hero will overcome this situation. At least that's what's going to happen if he reaches his objective.

Then, what he means by not knowing who will be hostile against him… does that mean he is also thinking about confronting the hero?

Just who in the world is this guy?

"I have understood this in the fight we have had until now. You are not a golem. That attire is an equipment that has quite the high performance. You… have an inside" (Io)

I try throwing a lure.

"Of course. I am not a golem. This is equipment. When I put it on, I am unable to use magic though. Even if it's inelegant, the reason is just awful" (Makoto)

Not even trying to deceive huh.

I have never seen nor heard of a full-body armor that has this much strength. But at the very least, this is indeed an equipment.

That leeway of easily telling me this…

I will have you regret it.

“It is actually not that compatible with me. If I forcefully use a spell, it seems it will self-destruct, so it is quite problematic” (Makoto)

“Even when you have obtained an equipment of that degree, you say such extravagant things” (Io)

There’s a restriction huh.

It’s inadvisable to use magic.

So that means it practically doesn’t have restrictions towards warriors.

There’s no real merit in having a magician use it, so it is not an article that has an actual restriction.

“Here I come. The Heisei series is a standard, so it is a demonstration” (Makoto)

The white guy politely gives me a sign and I take my stance.

But he suddenly squatted.

Right in front of me, he bend his knees.

What?

What is he intending to do?

“Claymore” (Makoto)

Along with those words, right next to his bend legs, a box-looking thing appeared.

Just where did that come from?!

“Wa?!”

Hibiki is shouting something.

As if shaking off her shout, around 4 things were fired from that box!

A projectile weapon huh!

It isn’t that fast.

Even if I receive some of them, there’s no need to take them all.

More like, there’s nothing to lose in evading things I don’t know the power of!

“Hm”

I evade the cylinder-like things coming at me.

Umu, I was somehow able to evade th– what?!

It looks like they changed their directions and came flying at me from angles I can’t dodge from.

Can’t be helped!

I use all of my arms to defend against it.

An ear-numbing explosive sound reverberates.

Heat and shock.

Smoke.

A weapon that has explosion magic endowed?!

This kind of thing, even we don’t have it.

“Scissor hands Knuckle”

While my normal senses still hadn't returned, I heard his voice.

I received a shock, different from the explosion, on my chest.

"You, what did you…" (Io)

"Eh, this is not where the heart is?" (Makoto)

"Oooh!"

Leaving myself to the impulse welling up from inside me, I give him a strike to the sides.

His evasion won't make it in time.

The guy was blown away in a horizontal direction.

"Hah… hah…" (Io)

I look at my chest.

There, two blades were pierced into it.

How annoying!

I pull them out and throw them away.

I glare at the guy that was send flying.

There, a white person stands up like nothing.

The scissor-like thing that is extending from the back of his hand, was broken around the middle.

"The scissor isn't useful for practical use it seems. This is… an anchor. That Mio, she is being driven by her hobbies way too much" (Makoto)

It's coming!

The white guy is casually running towards me.

This black skin is insufficient against him huh.

He is a preposterous monster!

In a place slightly farther from the range of my kick, he makes a sudden brake.

What's coming this time?!

His gesture of abruptly lifting his left hand only makes me agitated.

He is going to shoot something.

Is he going to use another projectile weapon to attack?!

Wait, then why did he get this close?

No matter which it is, at this distance and with that speed, I have no choice but to defend.

I can tell that my irritation towards losing the initiative is increasing.

Slipping through my gauntlets, I feel something piercing the top of my shoulders.

But it doesn't seem to have much power in it.

Just what in the world—-

"Uooh?!"

Suddenly, my body was drawn towards that guy in an instant.

I can't oppose it!

Against someone that has practically the same stature as a hyuman, I can't oppose it?!

"Guuugh!!"

While I was floating midair, I receive a right punch from him and was send flying.

This kind of thing… this kind of thing, just how in the world does it

happen?!

The attacks of the white guy doesn't stop.

The effect of the projectile weapon must have stopped already, he came at me himself.

But he doesn't know about my high speed healing and regeneration yet.

I received quite a lot of damage, but I concentrate and return my condition to normal.

I made it in time!

He still has quite a lot of distance to cover, and yet, he kicked the ground and jumped to the air.

So this time it is from above huh.

… This is, a chance!

If he is in the air, he will obviously have to come down.

It is possible to add power with the descend, but on the other hand, it leaves lots of openings.

Then he is prey for a counter!

Matching the timing, I will do a turning kick with all my might and —

"Wh-at?" (Io)

My kick hit the air.

That guy, without showing any signs of using magic power, was standing still in mid-air.

To possess flying abilities even when he has that size and doesn't have wings… just who would be able to imagine that?

"If I remember correctly, it was this, right? Kick" (Makoto)

That guy mutters something and in the moment he says ‘kick’…

In a speed I don’t know from how high one would have to fall to be able to reach that velocity, he pushes out his legs and plunges at me.

I twist my body.

But I did a turning kick just a few moments ago.

I can’t do a satisfactory evasion in time.

His kick connected at my flank and was atrociously gouged out.

I felt like screaming at the intense pain.

But my eyes reflected the figure of that guy that is landing at my back.

Heal, heal, heal!

If it’s in that stance filled with openings, I can use the combo attack that crushed Hibiki!

He has more weight than Hibiki, so I will definitely be able to strike the whole attack on him!

I confirm every part of my body.

No problem.

My decision speed and legs were faster.

One of my left arms grabbed his neck.

You damn monster.

Even so, I can’t lose!

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

The white guy poured on Io an attack that looked like the ones special effect heroes do in commercials.

Unbelievably, it seems to be doing damage to Io.

A signature move of doing a jumping kick.

It seemed to have attack power surpassing mine. It gouged out a great part of Io's abdomen.

And yet, Io regenerated in a few seconds and grabbed the white guy.

Even though he regenerated that much when he was fighting me, are you telling me his regeneration is bottomless?

There's mamonos who specialize in regeneration, but they mostly have a limit to it.

When I think that Io still had a lot of leeway left, I felt my emotions growing darker.

As I thought, maybe to truly defeat Io, there's the need of a big attack.

That is something I 'still' don't have.

Io grabs the white guy and just like that, as if drawing an arc, he threw him onto the ground.

That's it.

I had a hunch.

The combo attack I received where I felt like I was going to die and was unable to maintain my clad state with Horn.

I was able to instinctively clad it again, so I was saved, but it was an attack that wouldn't be strange for me to die.

"Hey there, Larva rear guard. Your master is in a pinch, you know?" (Hibiki)

Within the barrier, I call Larva who has stopped his aria.

The Lich is overflowing with incredible magic power.

Since the moment he put on those strange rings, his power clearly sprung up.

Right now, his magic power surpasses mine by more than 2 times.

The amount of spells he can utilize are plenty and I can tell he is on a completely different plane compared to the Liches I have battled with before.

Even in the moment when he first took out his scythe I thought: ‘He is a strong Lich’, after all.

“My answer is the same as before. He is not the type of person that would need support for something of this extent. Don’t think he is the same as you who thinks that everything can be resolved by joining powers” (Shiki)

“… I said it as an advice out of good will though” (Hibiki)

“Unnecessary. Rather, you should make sure not to make master feel at a lost with that severe exposure. Prepare something to wear” (Shiki)

“?!! You said that we shouldn’t leave the barrier you made, so isn’t that cruel?” (Hibiki)

“Fumu. Then I will randomly search something for you. Wait for a bit. Seventh step, ‘Hell’ half-release. Equipping and activating” (Shiki)

…

What?!

A disgusting presence as if blocking my breath was spreading.

It seems the inside of the barrier had no changes, but in every space of the audience room, there’s some sort of mist coming out.

… No, it isn’t only this place.

The whole castle?

Are you telling me that he activated such a wide ranged spell?

“… It should be fine until the outer walls of the town. Just by using mist, that person’s mood will be harmed, but right now he can stay relieved. Go, ‘Mist Temple, Nivlheim’. Bring about weakness” (Shiki)

Outer walls?

The town’s?!

Larva looks at the pinky finger that had nothing on it but now has a black ring in it, and nods in satisfaction.

“Outer walls you say. Just what did you do?” (Hibiki)

“I have covered this place in weakening mist. It was master’s order to only use it as weakening. You should be grateful” (Shiki)

Half-release huh.

As it looks, it is a spell that affects in a wide range.

If holding back is weakening, then I feel like if it is all-out it would be quite bad.

In this world, individual power can easily surpass the bounds of strategy.

The concept of numbers and way of fighting is totally different from the modern world.

Larva is without doubt a tactical level power.

Mio-san as well, there are way too many outside powers that are way too strong.

“Well then, I will go search for something to hide your skin” (Shiki)

At the side of Larva who was talking carefreely, a heavy sound was made.

Right.

The white guy.

When I look at the source of the sound, it was as I thought, the white guy.

A boisterous dance of fists and kicks.

Moreover, synergy with the gauntlet's elements.

It is slightly different from Wu Xing, but he went from wind to fire; fire to earth; earth to water; is how it flowed in order to increase the power of the elements.

That it is not in a rotation is probably because there's still a hidden element, but I don't know what it is.

I don't even know if there's actually one, and it isn't something I need to investigate immediately.

In other words, Io is using that function to increase the power of every subsequent attack even when it is supposed to be a combo attack.

I unfortunately couldn't see it, but when I think about the lapse of time it took, he most likely increased the number of attacks compared to when he did it against me.

That white guy… is he still alive?

While I was looking, the white guy that was lying down at the bored out ground, stood up and cracked his neck as if it was nothing.

He is seriously a crazy existence in every meaning.

Ah, he staggered a bit.

Maybe it did actually have some sort of effect.

"Master, is it okay to look for something for the hero to wear?" (Shiki)

… Just what kind of master and servant relationship is this?

Those are words that make me doubt their relationship itself and the word ‘master’.

“Ah, yeah. Do so. Ah~ it hurt. You even used some sort of stiletto in the middle of it. It felt like a thud” (Makoto)

A stiletto he says?

If I remember correctly, it is like hidden daggers?

The one where they equip them in their fists and shoot it out to do damage to the inside of armors.

It exists even in this world.

In Japan I haven’t seen it, but I feel like it was a technique that I have been told to be careful of. But to actually hear it from someone is quite fresh.

“Master, I don’t think this brings too much harm but…” (Shiki)

“What?” (Makoto)

“I think that it isn’t good to get absorbed in the fight that much. I advise that you place everyone in a part of your head” (Shiki)

“… Understood. I will be careful” (Makoto)

“Then, be careful. Excuse me” (Shiki)

It is obvious, but his attitude is clearly different from when he is talking to me.

To have this Larva obey him, just who and what in the world is he?

My interest was piqued again.

He is… most likely not from Gritonia.

If it were Lorel, Chiya-chan should have known.

Then, Aion?

At that place, I have been to Tsige and I don't know much about the atmosphere of that country.

At the very least, if they had something like this, I think they would have send him to the frontlines a long time ago.

I heard from his Majesty that the country is quite worried about their decline in authority.

"Certainly, it would be better to have something to wear. Get too absorbed in it, huh" (Makoto)

"Hey, could you at least tell me your name?" (Hibiki)

I make up my mind and try asking.

I understand what he is saying and it seems like he understands my words too.

"…"

Ignored?!

I thought the white guy was intently looking at me, but he turned his heels and returned to fight with Io.

A ghastly existence that we have an abnormally low amount of information about.

To entrust my life to someone like him, I even felt disgust towards it.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

In the audience room that has turned into a battlefield, a strange silence was born.

The person that is wearing a white suit and fighting against the Demon General Io, Makoto.

At the back of Makoto, the hero party is covered by a barrier from

Shiki.

And just at its side, there's Shiki himself.

With his Lich form, he is standing still with 5 rings worn in all the fingers of his left hand.

Hibiki has a big mantle covering her body that Shiki obtained who knows where.

The healing has already been done, and they are unable to move away from this place because of Shiki's glare and words.

They were surprised by the out-of-norm fight, and for Hibiki, she really wanted to go repel the demon race forces that are rampaging in the castle and the town.

The current situation is that it is gradually turning worse.

"… You came out unscathed from that huh. Seriously, you aren't a superior dragon or a spirit inside that suit right? I even feel like there's more than one inside. A guy I can't tell the nature of" (Io)

As if the fight had returned to its initial stage, Io, who felt the meek atmosphere of Makoto, said this as if amazed.

Was the change in the middle his real nature, or was it not?

As expected, even Io can't sound out such a thing in this short amount of time.

"I am not unscathed. It hurt quite a lot. To be able to move this much and on top of that, you have regenerative powers. How unbelievable" (Makoto)

"Hmph. If it weren't in this situation, it wouldn't be bad to enjoy this kind of fight but…" (Io)

"Hm?"

"Uooooooo!!!"

Io inhaled greatly and suddenly shouted.

A big voice that would make one wonder if it resonated in the whole region.

Was it anger, or encouragement?

In the shout that continued on for a while, Hibiki and the others cover their ears.

Makoto and Shiki stayed the way they were.

Shiki's robe fluttered, but the two of them didn't show any signs of covering their ears.

"What? Is the real show starting now?" (Makoto)

"No. I was just announcing that I am an incompetent general, that's all. Right now, the people who didn't hear my voice must be receiving a thought transmission and passing it around" (Io)

"?"

"In the people that are participating in this attack, I was given some competent soldiers you see. They are people that my demon general companions went through troubles gathering" (Io)

"…"

That just now was a signal to use them. Maybe they have already used several of them though. What you said before… right, death soldiers. I told my soldiers to literally become that" (Io)

"Become, you say? They should be going through desperate effort already though" (Makoto)

"No. The latent power of living beings is quite profound and big. I learned this from the white woman that was the companion of that hero there" (Io)

"Your atmosphere… changed. So you were the type of person that used 'ore', huh" (Makoto)

“I will probably have no more chances to act as a general. There’s no need to keep up appearances either. It won’t be affecting the army itself anyways” (Io)

“That is?” (Makoto)

Makoto looks at the blue plant that Io takes out and asks him.

An item that looks like a rose.

It even looks like a work of art.

When Hibiki confirms that item from afar, she gulped her breath.

Not only her.

Everyone that was inside the barrier of Shiki showed an uncommon state.

Io only laughs lightly at Makoto’s question.

“Master! That is a fragment of the ‘Rose Sign’, an enhancing item. Its pseudonym is ‘the evil drug of power’, it is said to consume your soul, and in exchange of devouring your whole soul, it provides power to the user! It is normally light brown, so please think of it as being remodelled in some way” (Shiki)

“Fuh, as expected of a Lich. They are knowledgeable about this type of tools. That’s exactly right” (Io)

Even when its identity was revealed, Io didn’t show any agitation at all.

On the other side, Makoto narrowed his brows.

Well, in his current state where his face is hidden, no one would be able to tell his expression though.

“… Did you make your subordinates carry it as well?” (Makoto)

“It is a battle which many soldiers would be lost after all. It was dangerous to let hyumans hold it, but at first the objective was

mainly to collect it. Fortunately, it seems like it takes time to purificate this, so I was relieved when we were able to gather quite the amount. However… I didn't expect that I would be giving the order for forced usage. Well then, just what's the extent of the improved version of Rona; I will be testing it with my very own body. Rona told me to return no matter what, but having around a hundred subordinates use Rose Sign, and only having me survive is just no. Rejoice. I recognize you as a threat that has enough worth for me to use this" (Io)

"…"

"Gugh!! I see, this is dreadful. This swelling of power. What's wrong? I will have you accompany me, white guy!" (Io)

"Io, your subordinates are already dea– weakened through the power of Larva. They can't move properly" (Makoto)

"… The hyumans as well, right? Even if I look like this, I am able to do something like understanding the state of the battlefield. If I can't use thought transmission just because I am in the middle of battle, I wouldn't be fit to be a general after all. For the whole capital to be the target… that's amazing. If we had that power on our side, we would have been able to kill Hibiki before you arrived" (Io)

"Thought transmission huh. My ears hurt. Io, do you understand the meaning of having your subordinates use that item?" (Makoto)

"Of course. My brethrens that are welling up with power will stand up once again, and will slaughter all the hyumans that can't move. We won't steal and won't violate. But, we will kill our enemies. As long as it is alive, it doesn't matter if it's men or women of any age. If you want to stop it, I don't mind you leaving here. I still have my mission of killing the hero after all. I won't chase you" (Io)

"The war must end in a win, or it will be pointless huh. If all the soldiers that are attacking here have this kind of mentality as well… they are a threat" (Makoto)

"To think that you would think that way, I am happy. Demon

General Io, forward!” (Io)

Makoto grasped that the capital which was gradually turning silent, became enveloped in chaos again.

While slightly holding back his own battle immersion that was accelerating inside of him, he casted his body towards his fight with Io.

On the other hand.

There was someone who reacted heavily to the words of Io.

Hibiki.

Her comrades, the people that love her dearly…

She heard that they are being targeted for slaughter.

And by using Rose Sign to top it off.

Her past companion, Naval, used this tool to sacrifice her own body when fighting against Io.

They are using that very tool to cause a slaughter.

This isn’t something forgivable.

She is someone that can look at the death of people in a wider point of view.

She is also able to properly understand the worth other people place on her and their hopes.

That’s why, that proposition about leaving the capital temporarily and the sacrifices that this will create, Hibiki was able to accept it.

The intrusion of Io made it difficult to escape so she was unable to implement it though.

But the sacrifices that will be created right now, they are sacrifices that can be stopped.

If the white guy is going to stop the demon general, it is plenty possible to stop the demon army that has turned into death soldiers, is what she thinks.

Even if they are enhanced with the Rose Sign, Hibiki and the others are currently quite recovered already.

There's no point in staying still.

"Don't joke around. I won't overlook such a slaughter. If he is going to stop Io, we will gain control of the town! Everyone, prepare!" (Hibiki)

She stands up.

The mantle leaves her body and her skin is exposed.

As if concording to Hibiki's voice, the party stands up.

They began moving towards leaving the audience room, but then, they notice something.

The barrier has not dissolved and they can't leave outside.

"We can't leave… Larva-dono, release this barrier! We will suppress the chaos in the capital—" (Hibiki)

"I refuse. Yareyare, it was the correct choice to make it so you can't leave. Didn't I say this from the very beginning? My objective is to safeguard the hero. There's nothing that states about the freedom of the hero in this safeguard" (Shiki)

"Io is being held back by your master, isn't it?! It is vexing, but that person is way stronger than my current self. I have understood this after watching. But you see, in that case, there's no reason for us to be here! I am a hero. I understand what needs to be done!" (Hibiki)

"That's reckless" (Shiki)

"… Larva-dono, please listen. We have plenty chance to win. Io won't chase after me. That white guy will most likely hold back Io for a while. If you support him, that will be certain. And I know this

town completely. I won't die no matter what. Even if I have to use guerrilla tactics, I will wipe out the demon race" (Hibiki)

"I am not asking you for the contents of your plan. What I mean by reckless, is the fact that you guys are trying to oppose me. Right, at least show me that you can break this barrier by your own efforts. This is the Kokyu-whatever it is called, no matter the name, this is something that uses as reference a barrier that is pretty strong. It is weaker than the real thing though. If you are unable to do at least this much, you won't be able to save anyone" (Shiki)

"… 'If you oppose me, I will use all my power', you won't say that huh. Is it okay with that condition? If we are able to destroy this barrier, you won't stop us from heading to town, right?" (Hibiki)

"Master said half-release, after all. I can't do anything by my own convenience. If you are able to break this barrier, I won't go as far as saying I won't stop you, but I will think about it" (Shiki)

"It is irritating that I have to do so anyways. Can't be helped huh. Let me say this, my attack power is quite up there, you know?" (Hibiki)

"… Do as you wish" (Shiki)

Shiki was looking at the fight of Makoto and Io.

Even if Hibiki were able to destroy the barrier, he just needs to make a new barrier.

He had no intentions of letting Hibiki free.

More importantly, Io.

The tool called Rose Sign that Shiki knows, doesn't have that much potency.

Moreover, the speed in which it devours the soul is quite slower.

It is in the very word, 'improved'.

Makoto has now turned into a defensive fight.

He has done counterattacks, but in appearance, he is being pushed back.

(Well, it's not like he is actually receiving damage, so there's practically no need to worry though) (Shiki)

Is what Shiki thinks.

His master Makoto has high defensive power.

Right now he is using that armor to hide his appearance, so attacks do reach his body, but in normal circumstances, Io wouldn't even be able to touch Makoto at all, is how Shiki thinks.

That's why, he is looking at one of the few battles of Makoto with peace of mind.

He is following his master's order loyally.

Shiki is still preserving his own power.

At worst, if anything were to happen, as long as he, who is specialized in healing magic, is standing at the back, there's no fear of Makoto dying.

(Normally, people who rely on their armor for their defensive power, are brittle when receiving attacks directly. But this doesn't apply to Waka-sama. He possesses quite the amount of endurance against pain. If it's against an opponent so fast that the eye can't catch, it is fine to just finish it off with a spell by increasing its scope, but for that person who is able to bear it normally no matter what is thrown at him, even I don't know how to fight him. That demon general said he was going to show master hell before dying. That's quite pitiful) (Shiki)

Shiki silently overwatches the fight of Io and Makoto.

Just in case Io charges to where they are, Shiki had several spells stocked up.

He is sufficiently prepared.

Shiki felt power activating several times from behind him, but he didn't even turn his head.

He has a grasp of the approximate range, and he understands that they are attacks that can't break the barrier after all.

A remarkably strong power rises.

Shiki showed a slight reaction.

Along with Hibiki's battle shout, an attack from her flashes at the barrier.

But the barrier wasn't destroyed.

"More… power. I can still do it. I will show even more power!!" (Hibiki)

The muttering Hibiki falls down.

If she has lost consciousness, it is good to have silence.

Shiki once again lost interest in her.

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"Where… is this?"

Hibiki looks at her surroundings.

She is suspended in the starry sky.

She doesn't fall nor rise.

Without getting unsightly confused and without losing her vigilance, she was trying to understand her surroundings.

"It resembles the time when I was called by the Goddess, but… I feel like this is different" (Hibiki)

Her closest experience to this kind of thing has been in Japan, in the one act where she was called by the Goddess.

But she felt like something was different this time.

It was just her instinct telling her, but Hibiki is putting importance in this sensation.

Thanks to it, she was able to put a good fight against Io, and she was able to bring out the powers of the silver band and evolve the sword that she received from the Elder Dwarf Beren.

“Nice to see you have come, person who has transferred worlds”

“… Who are you?” (Hibiki)

A voice directly resounds in her head.

As expected, this really does resemble the time with the Goddess, is how Hibiki felt.

“Being asked who I am will only trouble me. I don’t have a name. In the end, this is the only time we will meet, so no need to mind it”

“I am grateful that you have brought me out of the barrier. But if you have business with me, can you leave it for later? Right now I have something I must do no matter what. Return me to the capital” (Hibiki)

“Don’t rush. Your body is still inside that barrier. What’s here is only your soul. Also, the time passage in this place doesn’t even reach an instant on the other side. You can rest assured”

“Instant? Is it okay to think of it as a second?” (Hibiki)

“That’s how it is. Well then, I will continue the talk. Person who has transferred worlds, Otonashi Hibiki”

Hearing the voice that knows of her own circumstances, Hibiki increases her vigilance by a bit.

“… You know that I am a hero, right?” (Hibiki)

“Of course. You and another person, Iwahashi Tomoki. You who has been chosen by the Goddess and holds the mission of being a hero”

“You also know about him?” (Hibiki)

“Yeah. He has already come here after all. Oh, there’s no need to talk about him. What you need to know is about what will happen from now on”

The voice shows slight agitation at the fact that it let out the name of Iwahashi Tomoki.

So it was a verbal slip, is what Hibiki imagines.

In a situation where she practically knows nothing, she didn’t even understand if this was an advantage or a disadvantage though.

“From now on?” (Hibiki)

“That’s right. You have obtained the qualifications. The qualification for a special privilege given to people that transfer worlds, that is”

“Qualification?” (Hibiki)

“Yeah. It is not such a complicated thing actually. The amount of dying transferred are not low. Saying it in a rough manner, the main point is to strongly think of your own purpose. What you have to do and what you crave for. Well, even if those varieties are good are bad, it doesn’t matter”

“Good or bad, you say. I don’t understand the meaning” (Hibiki)

“Even if it’s love or friendship, even hatred or jealousy…. Hm, for some reason, I end up saying more than necessary when talking to you”

“…”

“Doesn’t matter the circumstances. Let’s continue. I will have you answer several questions”

“A quiz?” (Hibiki)

“No. Questions that have no correct answer. There are quite a lot of

those right? Questions that have correct and questions that don't. It's those kind. Depending on that, your privilege will change"

"Privilege… Is it possible to increase my power as well?" (Hibiki)

"The details will come after inquiring your nature. Well then, let's begin. Just what color will be the result~ I am looking forward to it"

……

……

"Okay, good work. Fufufu, Hibiki, your results have appeared"

"Make it quick. Even if you tell me time won't pass, my feelings get agitated. You said something about color, right? Tell me quick" (Hibiki)

"Yes yes, Otonashi Hibiki, you are 'black'"

"Black?" (Hibiki)

Hearing an unexpected color, Hibiki repeats it.

She hasn't been compared to black that much.

There's a lot of good opinions about black, but there's also a lot of bad ones as well.

There's the impression of a shadow, and it isn't a color Hibiki likes that much.

The amount of black clothes she wears are low.

"That's right. Black. A section of one of the most superior colors"

"Most superior… it is a good result then?" (Hibiki)

Even if she is told the 'most superior', she has never heard of a classification in colors.

Hibiki was unable to make a conclusion.

“Yeah, of course. Tomoki was also the same. The transferred people that have come are truly exceptional”

The same as Iwahashi Tomoki.

When Hibiki hears this, her expression darkens.

It isn’t truly the case, but the moment she heard that they were the same, she didn’t feel that good.

“… And so, what does black do anyways?” (Hibiki)

“You see, black is… a color that Gods will never be able to obtain. Just a few rare cases happen where humans are able to obtain this color. Its alias… ‘omnipotent color’. Attack, defense, support, healing, summoning, etc. The amount of things it can’t do are fewer”

“An omnipotent color…” (Hibiki)

“Now then, Hibiki. Let’s make a power. First of all, make suggestions one after the other. I will tell you the price of it. It is okay to decide by taking that into consideration. That is the privilege of the transferred. Oh right, there’s one point I have to warn you about. You can’t choose the same type of system that another person of the same axis of time has chosen. I ended up saying it before, but the other hero has obtained an attack power, so you can’t choose an attack type of power. But well, something like summoning a star is possible though”

“Then a power than can control the world, is also possible?” (Hibiki)

“Of course. The price of that power would be your whole magic power and around 80% of the living beings in that world. You can’t choose who remains, but you will definitely survive”

“… Rejected” (Hibiki)

“I see. The war would definitely finish, you know? I don’t know what that Goddess would say, but she wouldn’t be able to punish you. Ah, I said something unnecessary again”

“Shut up” (Hibiki)

Hibiki ponders.

It seems like the attack system is already in the possession of Tomoki.

In other words, it would be safe to assume that he has an incredibly powerful attack magic.

There’s also the method of attacking by summoning a star and hitting with it.

(Then, should I obtain a defensive magic that can go against Tomoki? No, can’t do that. If that happens, I wouldn’t be able to destroy even a single one of Larva’s barriers. Then, healing? I do think this is useful, but if I am unable to save the capital, there’s no point. A power that can become an attack in essence. It is possible but…) (Hibiki)

The suggestion was so grand and vague that Hibiki is troubled.

Then… after enumerating the things she can’t do, she felt some sort of aim in mind.

“You won’t tell me the things I can’t do aside from the attack system?” (Hibiki)

“Fufufu. I can’t do that. You have to choose the power you want yourself. That is also one of the rules. It isn’t something that’s normally asked, but you have quite the good head there”

Maybe the voice found her question interesting, he answered in an amused manner.

His answer was rejection though.

“Hey… is it possible to return to the past?” (Hibiki)

After a while of thinking, Hibiki opened her mouth.

It isn’t something that will save the current capital, but it is one

method to do everything again.

“Sailing against the currents of time? If it’s that, it is possible. If you repeat the times on a same world several times, the price gets higher, so it is more practical to narrow your cases though”

“Repeating several times… in other words, if I return to the same past, the price will get higher, right? Is it not okay to just place a restriction on the amount of times? There’s no point in going to the pasts of other worlds anyways” (Hibiki)

“It is not like there’s no point. The parallel worlds are also worlds as well after all. Because two humans have influxed into that world, right now an enormous parallel world has been born, so the world you think about is your own world. Isn’t it interesting to test out the probabilities in different worlds? You might be able to create a world where the capital has not turned that way, after all”

The voice states an opinion as if it is suggesting time travel.

“By the way, what is the price?” (Hibiki)

“If you are going to sail through the times of the same world, it will only be once. You will die at 30 years old. If you are going to move through parallel worlds, your lifespan will be scraped off one year each time”

“… That’s messed up” (Hibiki)

“Ahaha. There’s a hidden technique about this as well. You have to give up being a human, but if you change into a race that doesn’t grow old and has no lifespan, the demerit would disappear. If you weren’t black, you wouldn’t be able to use a power that interferes with time, but after leaving this place, there won’t be problems if you just forsake your humanity”

“Thanks for your kindness. A retry is, in essence, practically impossible huh” (Hibiki)

“Yeah. Time travel is a return, not a retry. If something like a loop is okay and if it’s a parallel world, it can be given to you at a low risk though”

"… You, do you want me to have a power that can manipulate time?" (Hibiki)

"I only honestly answered your question, that's all. No other meaning"

(If possible, I want something that can be used several times and the price is small. Something that can break-down the current situation) (Hibiki)

Being troubled, Hibiki sinks into silence.

The voice doesn't seem to be giving any suggestions itself. It doesn't propose anything.

"… Something that can disperse any magic. A dispel magic is possible?" (Hibiki)

"Uwa, what a boring power. Well, it is possible. The price would be magic power only. Right, if it's the current you, you would be able to use it 5-6 times without any problems"

"I see. Meaning, there's no permanent price, right?" (Hibiki)

"Yeah. But something like dispel, isn't that kid there able to use it as well?"

The voice nonchalantly says something surprising.

"Ha?!"

"The kid fighting that giant. He said that he is able to use dispel. Another person is already able to use it. In other words, it is a power that can be obtained through effort. Isn't that boring?"

"The white guy. That guy, he is able to do something like that?!" (Hibiki)

"Why don't you try asking him? If it's your request, he might hear it out"

"… Wait a moment. 'Him'? Do you know that white guy?! Could it

be, he received that special effect hero set from here?!" (Hibiki)

"Buh– Hahahahaaha!! There isn't a single person that has wished for something as unsightly as that. Well, if asked if I know him, I do though. He is a hyuman after all. I wonder… I don't think he will ever come here"

"If you know him, you should be able to talk with him right?! Hm? If it's my request he might hear it out? Does that mean—?!" (Hibiki)

"Sadly to say but, he is not an acquaintance. I just one-sidedly know him. Also, I can't be that supportive. Okay, this talk is over. Hibiki, decide your power"

"Kugh… you were the one who brought the topic!" (Hibiki)

The voice stays silent.

Hibiki once again ponders.

"… In that case…"

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

Too bad. That girl didn't choose the time power. But even so, for her to imagine a power that is practically the ground of being a hero. Hmph hmph, that kind of power is a first"

The voice muttered in a space where no one is anymore.

Even when Hibiki is not there anymore, its appearance was nowhere to be found.

"A power that is passively activated. To change the concept that people place on her into power, huh. She is a charismatic girl so, I wonder, just how much will this enlarge her? The price was only to decrease her amount of magic power, so it is something she would soon get back anyways"

Hibiki's guess was right.

It seems like the voice was trying to make her choose the time

travelling power.

It wasn't thinking about it that strongly though.

"If she were to explosively create more parallel worlds, I thought I wouldn't get bored though"

A slightly disappointed voice echoes in the empty space.

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"What?"

"I have destroyed it, Larva-dono! I will be leaving okay?!" (Hibiki)

With a level of power completely different from before, she destroyed the barrier from the inside.

At the unknown power-up of the hero, Shiki reflexively turns around.

"You are practically a different person. Is that also the power of a hero?" (Shiki)

"That's a secret. Do you intend to stop us?" (Hibiki)

"It's master's order after all. Hm?" (Shiki)

Shiki turns his gaze away from the spirited eyes of Hibiki, and looks at a certain place.

There's nothing. Hibiki thought that he was looking at a corner of the ceiling.

"That helps! I will be going now!" (Hibiki)

"No, wait! Something is coming! Master!" (Shiki)

Hibiki and the others use the opening he created to leave the audience room.

While clicking his tongue, Shiki calls them out and Makoto as well.
＜Lol, what tongue＞

Makoto who was fighting the shining Io, takes distance from Io the moment he hears Shiki's words.

But Io didn't let him escape.

Within the multicolored storm of fists, Makoto was swallowed again.

"Larva! It's okay! Go together with the hero! I am leaving them in your hands. Are you serious? In this situation, even you are coming, Sofia?!" (Makoto)

Maybe Makoto had a bit of leeway, he answers the voice of Shiki.

He understood that the situation was deteriorating.

"What are you saying? Your opponent is me right?! Or are you saying it is fine to chase after Hibiki?!" (Io)

"I can't let you chase after the hero! It should be fine to just do a rematch after the winter passes! Withdraw!" (Makoto)

"A youngster like you that doesn't even know about war, shouldn't be prattling like you know! It is necessary to defeat the threats no matter what!" (Io)

Makoto knew about the being that was drawing near.

Inside of him, that person is the strongest opponent he has fought with.

An opponent he has clashed against with hostility, ill will, and bloodthirst.

"They are planning on doing something! Be careful!" (Makoto)

"Understood. I won't let them see here. Depending on the situation, please go ahead and take it off" (Shiki)

"Understood. It will probably turn out that way" (Makoto)

Shiki turns his back towards Makoto and chases after the hero with

teleportation.

Makoto saw off his follower as he felt his suit creak at the fists that have increased its power to a stupidly high level.

Changing his [Sakai] from perception to strengthening, he makes a recovery.

While at it, he clashed his fist against the fist that was approaching him with all he had, and a recoil occurred.

Distance was created between them once again.

Without magic, he also had no winning move, is something he has thought as well.

As long as the time is up, Makoto thought that his win would be decided. And there was no chance he would lose.

For Makoto who was trying not to immerse too much into the fight, he was even thinking about having Io live if it was possible.

If it's an enemy, he will kill.

Right now he was fighting in a way that he doesn't have to enter that step.

But if the enemies increase, the story changes.

Shiki's words were a grateful thing for Makoto.

Because if he is able to use magic, his safety levels will increase after all.

Increasing his physical attacks is not an advantage in any way for his current self.

The suit has no merit aside from hiding his appearance.

That's why he let Hibiki go.

If Shiki accompanies her, he judged that she would be safe.

Because he knows that Sofia will definitely aim for him.

Makoto had a strange confidence in this.

Makoto looks above in an annoyed manner.

—At that moment.

A countless number of swords rained down on the capital.

A light and an explosion.

It looked like the metropolis of Limia Kingdom was approaching destruction.

Chapter 158: The revelation of the Dragon Slayer

"At this kind of times, I am jealous that you have a toughness that can shrug anything off by regenerating"

In the audience room that had turned silent.

In that place where it has completely turned into a stargazing garden, I release my defensive stance.

"So you can turn into a state where you can fight against the current me at practically the same speed huh. That you don't even need regeneration power, I can only laugh!" (Io)

Io who recovered at a relatively fast speed, releases a combination with his four arms.

His aim is my chest.

The four attacks were with the stiletto version. After being blown away and destroying several pillars along the way, I felt my breathing clog up.

That hurts.

I was thinking about taking off my disguise and erasing the effect of that self-sacrificing item of his, but when I checked the abilities of this transformation suit that Mio humbly made, I found something.

Inside the helmet, there's a futuristic three-dimensional image of its manual projected at the retina.

How uselessly high spec.

The ones with the spider mark are the special techniques list huh.

I didn't use anything aside from the kick, and there was a whatchamacallit before the kick itself, but I felt like I would get exhausted by doing it, so I decided to omit it though.

When I omitted it, there was a polite voice telling me about the input miss and that there would be a penalty of 40% reduction of damage.

Just how far is this a toy and just how far is this serious, I don't know.

Forced transformation release.

From what Mio commented, it seems like it is okay to use it when a similar hero appears as an enemy.

'If you use it, you will also be a dark hero-desu', is the part I ignored.

When I look at the ability in detail, it was a dispel magic with heavy restrictions.

The magic spell is several times easier to use than this, but when thinking about the connection between Io and Rona, this one is better.

My face won't get exposed after all.

Also, the condition about being obligatory to make contact with the target is actually pretty easy to clear in Io's case.

Even if I just wait, he will be coming himself anyways.

And it seems like he won't be breaking with the attack after all.

"That toughness is not only coming from your armor. Even if you were using an enhancing magic, I can't think of you as a hyuman" (Io)

“I will take it as a compliment. Even when you have such an indiscriminate attack like that, your target is still me. What about the hero?” (Makoto)

“… The reactions of my subordinates are mostly gone. Instead of looking for the hero in all this rubble, I will first deal with you. Fortunately, I still have several hours left” (Io)

“The person that made this attack, from what I remember, should be a companion of yours though. What’s that about?” (Makoto)

“So you know. You really are even more of an unknown being. But if you know about them, you should also know that they are not people that one can place collars around, right? Their fangs were coincidentally not directed at our side, so we are using them, that’s all the relationship we have” (Io)

“… I see” (Makoto)

“And, what is with your stance? What are you going to show me next?” (Io)

“Who knows. Just wait and see” (Makoto)

I stand up at half-length and raise my right hand high.

The knife hand is facing Io.

Io is exchanging his soul for power. I find the core of the magic formation that is cladding his body in light particles.

In Mio’s comment, it said: ‘Use the eye of your heart to find the weak point of your opponent’ or something like that. It seriously didn’t help at all.

I expand [Sakai] to a range that covers me and Io, and grasp the flow of power.

Because I reflexively changed into defense when the light swords rained down after all.

That I was able to instantly change it back must be because of the

fruits of my hard work.

I see.

At his right shoulder, close to the joint huh.

“Then, show it to me!” (Io)

“…”

Io who had taken a muscle bane and obtained scary acceleration speed, charges at me in a straight line.

By nature, just by doing this, a giant is a threat.

Their body weight is a weapon.

And if that body weight is coming from his muscles, that danger increases by several times more.

If a giant learns martial arts, a hyuman who is by nature losing in body weight overwhelmingly, has no chance of winning, is how I think.

Big, fast, and tough.

It is truly great that I didn’t encounter this kind at Japan.

“?!”

I calmed down and steadied my aim.

But Io suddenly kicked the ground and jumped through the air.

This is agitating!

It is agitating, but it is a cold sensation I have felt when I was fighting him.

Without turning too much attention to it, I place my awareness in several areas of the place.

…

It is fine for it to be a mutual strike.

Right now, his strongest advantage, that weapon, I will be stealing it.

I drop the kick that was approaching me.

If I received that one attack, leaving aside the damage, my posture would break.

But with my half-length stance, I am able to easily avoid it.

Success.

I couldn't find the opening that should come after a landing.

2 arms are coming to grab my head.

It is here.

"[Spell Break]" (Makoto)

"!!!"

As if dropping directly from below, I cut Io's right shoulder with my right arm.

Just as aimed, I made a straight line at the place where the Rose Sign's power concentrated the most, and my right hand reached the floor.

My head was grabbed and I was thrown.

The fist combo didn't even reach ten hits before stopping.

If it's only this, there's no problem.

The suit creaks, but it doesn't result in destruction.

A kick approaches my face.

I curl up my body and do a kick myself, I meet him with the same attack.

Even if I receive some attacks, as long as I destroy my opponent's strongest weapon, it will become more easy.

The return for this is higher than the amount of punches I have received.

"Fuh~" (Makoto)

I exhale.

I make my respiration as big as possible.

I return my heart to a point where I don't enter to the cold side anymore.

And I look at Io.

He was standing in place just like that.

The place I cut has already been healed.

As expected of his regenerative powers.

However.

There's no light coming from his body anymore.

"… What did you do?" (Io)

"I destroyed the Rose Sign" (Makoto)

"Destroyed you say?!" (Io)

"That's right, destroy. The gone portion will not return, but that power has already disappeared" (Makoto)

"Impossible. Such a crazy thing is just…" (Io)

"You shouldn't have any spares of an item of that type. Do you still… intend to fight?" (Makoto)

Io, Sofia, and also Lancer.

I don’t want to fight them all at the same time.

If asked if this castle can still be resided in or used, my answer would be no though.

If I go against those kind of people here, this place will, without doubt, turn into less than an empty plot of land.

With those light swords and the explosion, the capital is already done.

They would have to use another town as their capital, or create a new one all over again.

I think that the demon race has gained at least 2 or 3 years against Limia Kingdom with this move.

I don’t know how much damage Gritonia has received, but even if Stella is forfeited, the demon race still has sufficient plusses out of this.

As long as the hero is in good health, I don’t think Io and the few demon race troops remaining have any intentions of withdrawing though.

“King of dragons that live for eternity…”

“?”

“Sofia… this is, an enhancing aria? That woman, why did she suddenly appear in the capital? What happened with the Empire?” (Io)

An enhancing aria.

With Io’s words, I notice a voice that resounds in my whole body.

This is certainly Sofia’s voice.

She isn’t just shouting loudly, she is doing an aria.

She is at the sky.

I have already grasped her location.

… I know that it is pointless with someone like her though.

What she is doing right now is purposely continuing her aria in a wide space and have her voice echo to declare her spell in a grand way. A special type of aria.

I can see quite the elevation of power.

Just, the composition of the spell is easy to read, and it is easy for your opponent to make a countermeasure for it.

In other words…

If it's a spell that is seen for the first time, it is quite effective.

Even so, in towns and castles there's a nullifying barrier for large scale magic, so even if you fortify your magic that acts like artillery and shoot it to the town, there's not much point.

For them to have a barrier that nullifies magic of a certain level is quite well thought.

If it is a lower leveled spell, it will be discovered when doing a fortifying aria, so the town is most likely taking precautions in that point. It is also normal for the power itself to be insufficient.

"Blade Dragon, Water Dragon, Fire Dragon, Shadow Dragon…" (Sofia)

Quite the long aria.

On top of that, the flow is directed to the inside.

Is it a buff skill for herself?

From what I remember, support magic that uses aria and is targeted to yourself has quite the brutal efficacy.

Io is probably measuring the true intention of Sofia as well. He is looking at her grain-like figure that is floating in the sky.

If even the ally in outline doesn't know, there's no way I would understand.

But I will prepare myself for it.

It seems like Sofia's aria will be continuing for quite a while and Lancer seems to have descended to town, but hasn't shown much movement.

Shiki is also in that state. Leaving aside if he is able to defeat Lancer or not, he will most likely be able to hold him back.

After that, I can only pray that senpai doesn't do anything reckless.

This is the first time I see such a busy-body senpai.

From what I remember, she was a person that always finished things with a composed face though…

When one lives at a parallel world, many things are just different huh.

While being vigilant of Io, inside of the suit, I confirm my body enhancement and the magic power construction.

A rematch with the Dragon Slayer huh.

"Everything else, omitted!" (Sofia)

"Hah?!" (Makoto)

I unintentionally let out a voice of surprise.

Power converges at Sofia in high speed.

How irrational!

"Die"

That voice was sensed by my [Sakai] and reverberated in my ears when I was turning.

It reached the moment a flash flew straight at the crown of my

head.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

I am confronting Sofia.

While feeling the gaze of Io from my back.

Damn it, the suit is…

“You won’t die from that huh. Not only that, I only destroyed the suit and you were left unscathed. As always, you are way too interesting” (Sofia)

A ferocious smile I am familiar with.

A sword with the same color and is smaller in size compared to the one in my memories.

Even if I knew it with [Sakai], the feeling of confronting it in front of me is as expected, different.

“Sofia Blue” (Makoto)

“Yeah, that’s right. I am honored that you remember me. After that time, a lot has happened you see. I was sure you wouldn’t die from something of that extent” (Sofia)

“I was slightly hoping you were killed by that so called ‘Devil’ though. But as expected, you are still alive huh” (Makoto)

I barely didn’t encounter it though.

Seriously, what a lucky person.

“? What are you even saying? But I am happy. You were able to endure that after all. You are a lot stronger than that Empire hero-kun” (Sofia)

“… You killed the hero?” (Makoto)

Hey hey.

If she killed the hero, the Goddess would definitely get angry.

Maybe the Goddess will even bring it on.

Is Sofia gonna take that on too?

“No. Still not. He showed me something interesting, so I let him go” (Sofia)

“It seems like I also entertained you, so how about you leave for today?” (Makoto)

“Impossible. Lancer and I have recognized you as an obstacle. You will probably, no, definitely become an hindrance for us” (Sofia)

“… Intuition?” (Makoto)

“Yeah. This time, I will certainly slice into pieces that defense of yours” (Sofia)

I can feel that the blood thirst residing in Sofia’s eyes were rising close to its critical point.

If I fight with the current her, I must concentrate even deeper into the fight compared to when I was fighting Io, or I will end up hurt.

But Sofia is an enemy.

She has already declared her will to kill me. There’s no enemy as hostile as her.

Then what’s so bad about concentrating?

It’s fine as long as I return alive.

That’s right.

As long as I don’t forget myself, I will be fine.

“Now then…”

“Both of you, stop!”

“?!!”

“Ara”

“Rona? Why are you here?”

Rona?!

Right now when my face is revealed because of Sofia’s attack, she has come here?!

Just how unlucky am I?!

The Goddess, having to transform, Hibiki-senpai, Sofia, and now even Rona?!

It is like playing poker with joker being valid and having a five card thrown at me!

I was doing my best in Rotsgard, and was being happy about my straight and flush! And yet!

Everything is going down the drain.

No.

This time is, as expected, no good.

Not only me, the company; I have even dragged everyone of Asora in this.

Tomoe, Mio, and Shiki as well.

I definitely cannot give up.

Even if it’s by force, even if it’s against their will…

Even if the form and shape has slightly changed, I have to accomplish this no matter what.

Like hell I will give up.

“Sofia, and also the white… eh, you…” (Rona)

“…”

It has been exposed.

Damn it. When the time comes, it just happens so easily.

“Rai… dou?” (Rona)

“What?! This guy is Raidou?!” (Io)

It seems like Io also knows the name Raidou.

If Rona told him the features of my face, even without Rona coming, it would have been finished the moment I turned my face huh.

“Ara, you know Rona as well, Raidou?” (Sofia)

Sofia says so as if just remembering.

How dare you say it as if it’s nothing.

“Raidou, what is the meaning of this? You should be at Rotsgard at this moment, right? Why are you at the capital? Why are you being glared by Io and Sofia?” (Rona)

“… That is…” (Makoto)

“It seems like he exchanged an agreement with the Goddess. And he wants to save the Kingdom’s hero and bring down Stella” (Io)

“Wow, Raidou. For you to lie to me, well done. As I thought, you were really the pawn of the Goddess huh. Even so, Limia is misfortunate. If you hadn’t come, the castle and the town wouldn’t have turned out like this. If you went to the imperial capital, Mitsurugi and I wouldn’t have come here you know. How regrettable” (Sofia)

“… Agreement. I only made an agreement with the Goddess. We only made a promise to each other. It is not like I am her pawn” (Makoto)

Sofia uses an excessive gesture of surprise from the words of Io.

It is crumbling.

I felt a lot of things crumbling.

“Raidou, you promised that you would meet Demon Lord-sama, right? Then, you fighting the demon race, isn’t that an action that goes against your words?” (Rona)

Rona.

Even though you didn’t try to understand the hidden meaning of my own words.

She is probably saying this because she considers me easy.

For her, I must have been quite an easy to utilize hyuman in Rotsgard.

If Shiki weren’t there, I would have most likely been used even more.

“It is certainly true that I made a promise to meet the demon lord. But, I don’t remember promising to not hinder the demon race in any way. Rona, you must understand what I am trying to say here, right? I was asked to protect the hero and capitulate Stella. This is something that can be done even without killing the demon race. If you don’t want to lose brethrens, give up this time” (Makoto)

“Just a few days ago you called me Rona-san though. I see. The variant strife at Rotsgard angered Raidou this much huh. You didn’t seem like you had any special attachment to hyumans, so that should have had an effect in your strenuous life as a merchant there though?” (Rona)

“… By killing all the merchants that antagonized me?” (Makoto)

“The variants that the demon race released did whatever they wanted. So they won’t make you take responsibility, nor will they suspect you. It just happened to occur, after all. Raidou and the others were just taking refuge, and after that, the reinforcement

units of the different countries would appear and subjugate the variants. If you just returned to your business, you might have had a better environment for your work. That incident shouldn't have that many demerits for you" (Rona)

"That's unneeded help" (Makoto)

"… Right. Larva, no, Shiki huh. It is a company that has that kind of person close after all. Because of ethics, I didn't get involved much in it. But for you guys to have a part that schemed from the dark, it was quite the miscalculation. To think that in the act of being a naive and kind merchant, you were able to obtain the cooperation of that Larva" (Rona)

"I have done some cleaning at Rotsgard" (Makoto)

"I have gotten the report of it" (Rona)

"… The demon race should have been away from the town though?" (Makoto)

Isn't the report way too fast?

"Yeah, the demon race, that is" (Rona)

A demi-human then?

Looking at the army that Io leads, I have understood that the blue-skinned demons are not the only enemies of the hyumans.

I see. So there was a collaborator within the demi-humans huh.

Even if they have numbers, the ones who have enemies on all sides are the hyumans.

"That's crooked" (Makoto)

"I did protect my promise with you, you know? How about it. Want to make a deal with me again? I will support your business in the demon race territory with all I have. Of course, I won't stop you from doing business in the hyuman countries. I won't interfere with it either. In exchange, withdraw from here" (Rona)

“… I did tell you that I have a promise with the Goddess. Rona, you should be the one taking Io and returning to the demon base fast. And after that, have the personnel of Stella Fortress evacuate. If you leave them there, it will only increase the pointless sacrifices” (Makoto)

“Sofia there has already obtained power surpassing that of a hyuman, you know? Also, adding Io as well, do you think you will end up fine after that?” (Rona)

“… I have also been told many times that I breach common sense. No need to worry. It is fine. Rona, if you want to, how about joining as well? Because it seems like you are underestimating me a bit here after all” (Makoto)

“Wa?” (Rona)

Rona is left speechless.

These are words that don’t fit me much.

But in this occasion, no matter if it’s two or three, it would be the same.

It wouldn’t be too much for Shiki, but I wouldn’t mind even if Lancer were to come as well.

Concentrate, concentrate.

My magic has already been unbanned.

I should debut the results of my training.

Just how far can I go?

It wouldn’t be bad to confirm it with my enemies.

“Rona, those words are not haughtiness. Just a few moments ago, I used Rose Sign and was unable to finish him” (Io)

“ROSE—?! Io, I told you to return no matter what, right?! Why did you use something like that?! I had Reft hold it, so why do you

have it?!” (Rona)

“Like hell I can let only my subordinates hold something like that. Also, Reft was an adjutant of mine in the past. He agreed to my point. Also, if I am able to bring down the hero here, I don’t mind leaving the path to the future generations. She had become stronger than expected after all” (Io)

“Listen here! You who climbed up till the ranks of demon general, don’t go easily saying that you will die and leave the path to others! It is certainly true that the Lord we serve is the same, but the direction of that loyalty is different. I am not so narrow-minded as to not approve of a rare type of military man like you, Io. If you want to leave the path to others by all means, why didn’t you become an instructor and properly pass on that technique of yours?” (Rona)

“Ah, no well, sorry” (Io)

“And? The time you have left is?” (Rona)

“Well, that is…” (Io)

“There’s already no light coming out at all… You can’t return to the metropolis anymore?” (Rona)

Rona makes a voice that one can feel bitterness.

This person does have affection towards her companions huh.

No, Io also has an expression of surprise, so maybe the face she is showing is quite rare?

Sofia is pointing her sword at me, but she isn’t moving.

While surprised, I stealthily put [Sakai] in concealment and finish expanding my power.

Compared to all the misfortune combo I have received, this is a small blessing.

“The effect of Rose Sign is gone” (Io)

“… I see. Do you have any words you want to leave? No matter who, I will take responsibility and make sure those words reach that person” (Rona)

“No well, that man Raidou, cut it off” (Io)

“….”

“While the Rose Sign was activated, Raidou forcefully negated the Rose Sign. I don’t know what he did though” (Io)

“… Eh? Then, could that mean…” (Rona)

“… It is still not certain that I will die” (Io)

“!!! Then say so from the beginning! How misleading!!!” (Rona)

“More like, you should calm down. You were the one who didn’t let me talk properly” (Io)

“Uuuh”

Rona glares at me.

No no, I am not at fault here, you know?

Or more like, from what Rona has said, she should actually be thanking me.

“Fufufu… fufufu, ahahahahaaha!!” (Sofia)

The big laugh of Sofia rang in the audience room.

Even if the night sky is visible, an invisible barrier is placed here.

It is the support barrier that temporarily lost its effect because of the light swords.

As expected of the capital.

I expected no less from the castle of a major power.

Even if it’s destroyed, it is made so it can reactivate.

After she finished laughing for a moment, she looked at everyone here.

I thought that this would thin down her motivation.

But if it's her, that's just a fleeting dream though.

"I see! Even when Io placed his life on the line, he couldn't deal any proper damage! Fufu, fufufu! It is great that I 'released' first. If I am not in full-power, I might not be able to win" (Sofia)

"Full-power, of the Dragon Slayer huh" (Io)

Io mutters as if sighing.

"I feel like taking refuge" (Rona)

"Same here" (Makoto)

"Don't say that. You have that much worth, Raidou" (Sofia)

Sofia makes an evil smile like the one children make when they think up something bad.

"Ah right, Rona. About the matter of Seiko" (Sofia)

"What is it so suddenly?" (Rona)

"The name of the Devil, I remembered just now" (Sofia)

"Hah?" (Rona)

The name of the Devil?

As I thought, Sofia did fight against the Devil that was able to create a lake?

And she is still alive.

What impressive life power.

I was strangely moved by the battle junky.

“Let’s go for a rematch, Devil Raidou!” (Sofia)

“…..”

“?!”

“Devil?!”

Placing the one-handed sword that has some sort of red light clad on it and has extended its reach to the front, Sofia charges at me.

… Eh?

Devil?

Me?

Devil?!

Why do my fights with her always end up like this?!

My thoughts were temporarily stopped and I was able to somehow bring it back. While still stirred up, I clash with the Dragon Slayer.

The figure of Sofia disappears.

I know.

This is her conventional method.

I don’t know where her attack will come from.

That’s why, I aimed for this kind of power.

Different from the time against Io, I open my legs around shoulder width and stand in place.

I don’t think about evading. This is a stance for an exchange of blows.

Gakin—!!!

An ear-piercing sound.

It was from the left huh.

“This is!!” (Sofia)

“I faced quite the painful time with your surprise attacks after all. It just means that I have also gotten stronger” (Makoto)

Sofia’s sword stopped in a place a bit further away from me.

No, I ‘stopped it’.

“Ah, I thought I felt something. Raidou, when did you learn to speak? Does that have to do with you getting stronger?” (Sofia)

Changing her expression slightly, Sofia grabs a black darkness mass with her free left hand and pushes it towards me.

That also makes a dull sound and stops in the same place as the sword.

This woman, the elements she can use have increased from last time?

“Common language huh. I learned that just a few moments ago. What’s wrong Sofia? Your attacks are not reaching at all. How about using that red ki from before?” (Makoto)

I change [Sakai] from concealment to strengthening.

Dense bluish magic power spreads out from my body and takes form.

“Blade Dragon’s sword, Fire Dragon’s flame. Do you intend to block it?” (Sofia)

“It is a prided attack of yours that you tried using to kill me in one hit, right? I am telling you that it is okay to try it again” (Makoto)

I can tell that Io and Rona were gulping their breath from behind

me.

Io is not moving yet huh.

Or is he measuring the possibility of doing a joint front that doesn't entangle Sofia in it?

The thin sword of Sofia gets clad in a strong red light again and gets longer.

Here it comes.

"Then let's test it. I will also be exposing that trick you did just now!" (Sofia)

A flash.

Without taking a stance against the sword that is coming right from the front, I just watch over it.

Sofia went at it straight. It collided with the bluish magic power enveloping my surroundings.

And then…

That swung attack left some sort of colored trail, and as if her jumping back was some sort of signal, it exploded.

Just like those light swords. Was Sofia specialized in fire element?

Within the time my field of vision was clearing, that question popped up.

"Hyuman shaped… Is that constructed with magic power? No, but that is… no way" (Sofia)

"… That is his… true armor huh" (Io)

As expected of a demon general.

Since it is not concealed, it can be seen and analyzed as well.

The gears in my brain are not fast, that's why, instead of something

that is scary strong depending on the way it is used, I wanted something simple that, even when discovered, it would still be the same.

And this is it.

From my body, the silhouette of the upper half of a human is constructed in a size slightly bigger than Io.

Something that is created by my magic power.

It doesn't matter if it is discovered and it is able to deal with surprise attacks. Even I who can't use a giant amount of magic power at once, this method allows me to utilize a large amount of magic power.

"… It isn't a barrier against physical attacks, right? Raidou, are you sane? Having that much defensive power, and you are telling me that you have obtained another defensive skill?!" (Sofia)

"I can easily endure the charged attack of a Dragon Slayer. I have gained confidence now, Sofia" (Makoto)

"There was no magic activation either. There was no rebound characteristic of barriers. Just what does this mean? That thing clearly blocked my attack physically, right?" (Sofia)

Sofia is making a face she never made once in the past.

So she had that much confidence in that one attack huh.

Or maybe this ability I have obtained was completely out of her expectations.

Ah, I thought this felt familiar.

That's the same face Tomoe, Mio, and Shiki made.

"Yeah. I can materialize magic power. I can also return it to its natural state as well. The minus is that I can't take out its visibility, but I had another method to hide it anyways. That defensive power, is just like how I showed you just now" (Makoto)

The attack of Sofia and the explosion as well, didn't put any sort of damage to the magic power body (temporary name).

Well, of course, it doesn't only defend.

Even in attack, it is quite the foul play.

… I had a lot of hardships.

The materializing in itself and that domain and form as well.

As a result, I took as reference a certain fighting game that has a character with a spirit.

"Materialization of magic power huh. I have never heard of that before" (Sofia)

Sofia's words.

Well, yeah.

Until the time Eva-san showed me that thesis, I also had no idea about it. And there were no other thesis that were similar to that one.

In this world, it is a technique that was completely given up on after all.

"Rona, what is the materialization of magic power? Making things with magic power?" (Io)

"It is probably different. What Raidou is doing is… giving the physical attribute to magic power. Is how I think" (Rona)

"In other words, that mass of magic power shaped as the upper half of a hyuman, if it wanted to, it would be able to exchange fists as well? Isn't that awesome?! If it is possible to deploy it in that way, magicians would also be able to add to their defense" (Io)

"Yeah, probably. But… even the demon race has given up on that technique. The cost and performance is just way too bad after all" (Rona)

The tone of Rona was as if she was having a nightmare. She looks at the hyuman shape and me with eyes of disbelief.

“Io, if it is you, would you think that using one gold as material to make a copper coin is impressive?” (Rona)

“… No? I would actually think that’s stupid” (Io)

“Right? That’s exactly it. The materialization of magic power is just way too disbalanced. Honestly speaking, it is abnormally inefficient. There’s place to research in the change of specific substances in magic power though” (Rona)

“Is it different from physical barriers?” (Io)

“Sofia said it as well right? A physical barrier is a spell that activates by reacting to attacks of weapons and fists. What Raidou is doing is… not even magic. I don’t understand. Why did Raidou obtain that kind of skill?” (Rona)

Rona is grumbling as she enquires.

“Sofia, this time it’s my turn” (Makoto)

For me who couldn’t put a proper use to the magic power no matter how much I had, this power opened a large amount of possibilities. A revolutionizing thing.

First of all, the Dragon Slayer in front of me.

I will defeat this one first and conquer one of my traumas.

Chapter 159: Realizing he is the Devil

“Just as it is big, the speed isn’t much to consider huh!”

Dodging the fist that the magic power body punched out, Sofia jumps to close range.

She came at me with several attacks using her red light cladded sword.

But, it didn’t reach me.

“Well, I am not a master in martial arts after all. At any rate, those are quite the strong attacks. It doesn’t even compare to last time” (Makoto)

“… That’s obvious! This is—” (Sofia)

“The power of dragons huh. Taking into account the aria, did you borrow the power of another superior dragon?” (Makoto)

“How about this?!” (Sofia)

Not even an answer.

The figure of Sofia disappears.

It must be her prided teleportation.

Just that, it is slightly different from before.

At that time, she was exchanging her position with swords, but it looked like she is currently using a different method to teleport.

Is it the power of a shadow dragon or something?

Diagonally to my front, at mid-air, I feel her presence.

As if shouldering her back, she prepares her sword and around her chest there's a red sphere.

A long distance attack?

Sofia swings her sword diagonally and leaves a trail.

At that moment, the red sphere turns into something similar to a laser and heads towards me.

I reflexively use the magic power body's hand to stop it.

Crush it and erase it.

"Hmph~ it was like a laser. Is that the power of the fire dragon that you mentioned in your aria? When talking about a fire superior dragon, it would be the crimson fire dragon "Crimson Light Akari" huh" (Makoto)

"… This didn't work either. Crimson Light is the one that holds the strongest attack power among the dragon race though" (Sofia)

The Dragon Slayer that landed glares at me with intense eyes.

"I don't remember being hated by a dragon though" (Makoto)

Actually, I am being liked way too much by a dragon that has both sexes and it's even troubling me.

"Ara, don't worry. It is not like Raidou is being hated!" (Sofia)

Without learning, she charges at me again.

While repelling, I also launch my own attack.

"!!!"

The fist is evaded once again and, from the surface of that fist, a magic formation expands. From there, a laser type of attack like the one Sofia used, was shot.

But… Tch.

It was a surprise attack, and yet, she was able to block it with her sword.

As always, she has crazy intuition and an unbelievable sword.

But there's no need to care about that.

This magic power body also serves the purpose of strengthening my spells.

Actually, that's its main purpose.

I contain the magic power that has come out from my body in my surrounding.

Set [Sakai] at perception.

Because if it's her attack power, there's no need to use strengthening even if her power increases by double after all.

"How about, this?" (Makoto)

I look at where Sofia has taken distance, and make a short aria.

Several ripples appear from the front part of the magic power body.

Balls the size of fingers detach from the human shape and float.

"Is that, a defense mechanism?" (Sofia)

Maybe she understood what I intended to do, Sofia mutters as if groaning.

"It is not only that right, Sofia?" (Makoto)

Immediately after the balls trembled slightly…

An attack similar to the laser from before was shot in several small lines towards Sofia.

Bundles of light that were no fewer than hundred were heading at

Sofia, but she uses her usual teleportation to evade it.

But that's futile.

Her teleportation isn't the type that lets her escape into a different space.

She is just moving to a different location.

On top of that, from what I have seen, there's quite the limitation in distance.

Yeah.

There she is.

With [Sakai], I find Sofia hiding under cover.

To all the lights that were heading against a wall because they lost their target… I tell them her location.

"They curved?!" (Sofia)

All of the lights changed their direction and lunged towards the mountain of rubble that Sofia was hiding in.

Curving a laser type attack.

It is one of the dreams of men. Natto missile is also good.

The voice of Rona that I heard from the back was dyed in surprise.

Homing trait isn't that unusual of a thing though.

What I did just now wasn't homing but something close to adding a new input. It doesn't look that different though.

An explosion.

I can't tell the location of Sofia.

There must have been some damage there.

I turn to my back.

Io and Rona were looking at me.

“Io, you should release that dangerous stance. If you are going to get in the way, I will be taking proper steps” (Makoto)

“I think that our fight is still in progress though” (Io)

“I see. I did warn you, okay?” (Makoto)

“Raidou, that thing there, is it all your magic power?” (Rona)

“Rona, I don’t have any intentions to answer that. But I will give you an advice. Quickly pull back your personnel from Stella. It looks like I will be finishing this soon” (Makoto)

Io was facing me and showing a stance.

He is the same type as Sofia, so doing a joint front is difficult.

And yet, he is still trying to join into my fight with Sofia.

“Ah, right. You did have such an attack right, Raidou?” (Sofia)

Oya?

From inside the smoke, Sofia was standing.

I thought that she wasn’t unscathed though.

“You are practically like Io. Did you learn regeneration? How about calling Lancer?” (Makoto)

“I am calling him. It doesn’t seem like he is listening though. Looks like your servant is not letting him go, you know?” (Sofia)

“Ah~, I see. Then let’s finish this already, Sofia” (Makoto)

“… 4 superior dragons” (Sofia)

“Hah?” (Makoto)

“It is not only Mitsurugi and Waterfall like last time. I was elated by that time with the lake, so I also ate Darkness Clad and Crimson Light” (Sofia)

Ate?

She didn’t obtain the cooperation of the superior dragons?

“…”

“I noticed, the ability to eat the power of the dragons and assimilate it. I can brag about being the strongest among adventurers, but adding to that, I have also obtained the power of 4 superior dragons. I have enough power to destroy even a country” (Sofia)

A country?

With only this level?

“Next would be the Sand Wave Sazanami and the Invincible. If I kill those two, I would be able to reach the stage where I can devour Myriad Colors as well” (Sofia)

From the superior dragons I know of, those are all of them huh.

Among the 7 superior dragons, 4 are already within herself, and yet, she isn’t able to touch me. It must be quite the shock for her.

Also… Root.

Looks like her objective has something to do with Root, but… do I have to carry his destiny as well?

I will complain to him about this later.

“How exaggerated. You are able to destroy a country with only this level of power?” (Makoto)

“Plenty enough. That Io over there as well. He is able to destroy a small country. An army is just a power that weaklings flock to. For you and me, those kind of things just serve as targets. The power of individuals, that itself is national power” (Sofia)

“…”

Is that, how it works?

No well, I thought that individuals would be powerless against a flock like an army though.

Certainly.

When looking at this town’s situation and the progress of the battle, I did think: ‘Is this all they have?’.

Even if it’s a surprise attack, I wondered if this is the extent of armies and knight corps.

This world might be a lot ‘weaker’ than I originally thought.

“Seriously. Having scales coming from my skin is just unsightly. How dare you” (Sofia)

Sofia’s power increased a step higher.

The 4 colored powers that were residing in her body as well as her own power, it looked like they were merging and turning into some sort of marble pattern.

The color of her skin darkens slightly.

Just like how she said, I could faintly see scale-looking things.

Her nails lengthened and her eyes changed like the ones of Tomoe which were close to the vestiges of a dragon.

Instead of a Dragon Slayer, she looks more like a Dragon Kin now.

“A transformation? I don’t know about Graunt, but I don’t think you would be able to defeat Shen and Root” (Makoto)

“?! Shen and Root. It seems like the things I will have Raidou open his mouth for have increased” (Sofia)

“For you, that will be impossible” (Makoto)

“Leaving aside the Invincible Shen, the name of the Myriad Color superior dragon is known by practically no one. I will have you tell me a lot of things. Before you die, that is!” (Sofia)

“I see. Lately, I have been eating quite a lot with him though” (Makoto)

“Just how long can you keep that condescending tone?!” (Sofia)

Sofia touches the magic power body.

Just how many times will you do the same thing?

No.

She touched the human shape without holding a sword.

At the same time that I was thinking what she was intending to do, from Sofia’s hand, a pitch black mud-like darkness was spouted out.

I could tell that the darkness that was sticking to the magic power body was declining its strength at those portions.

The sword of Sofia that shone remarkably stronger, accurately makes a flash at the black marking.

“Heh～”

While raising my voice, I include an attack against Sofia.

Making several magic compositions, I fire it off from the human shape.

Spear spheres.

Firing off several attacks, they also did hit the target, but…

She didn’t stop.

Maybe she activated an instantaneous healing magic, she is cutting and cutting and cutting at me without caring.

While covering only her vitals and her right hand, she recovers

everything that injures her.

It seems like she has judged that this is the moment to decide the battle.

Oh.

At this moment Io is coming too huh.

I can tell that Io is charging at me from behind.

I have [Sakai] expanded with perception, so I can stop surprise attacks.

It seems like Rona is trying to stop him though.

Like Sofia, Io must have thought that this was the chance.

“Raidou, don’t think bad of m—” (Io)

“Io, why don’t you return? I will kill you, you know? Last time was advice, this time, it is a warning” (Makoto)

I firmly look at Io and tell him this.

The binded Io.

He is being grabbed by the hand of the human shape.

A third arm.

“Wa?!”

“Just because it is hyuman shaped, that doesn’t mean it will only be restricted to 2 arms. Even you have 4 arms after all” (Makoto)

Straightforward.

Facing the starry sky, I lift him up.

After an advance notice that I will kill him if he returns.

Well, he will most likely not return though.

“Rocket Punch, just kidding” (Makoto)

“Uoooo?!!!” (Io)

I cut off the arm and shoot it out at high speed.

The grabbed Io was unable to shake it off and while still struggling, he disappeared into the starry sky.

He was slightly valuable to kill, so well, no matter where he falls, he will most likely be able to repatriate.

I did release him towards Stella so there should be no problems.

“Don’t look away!!” (Sofia)

Along with Sofia’s words, she makes a swipe with all her might.

Ah, this one will be hard to maintain.

It has black markings placed here and there after all.

Kii—n!!!

An ear-piercing sound.

The human shape broke.

“With this-!!” (Sofia)

Well.

Gagih—!!

“!!!!”

I never said that I can’t reconstruct it though.

The reality that what she destroyed had appeared in an instant

again and blocked her sword; without letting escape that moment of disturbance by the reconstruction, I grab Sofia with the hand of the human shape.

“I wonder, just how good is your defensive power in that form?” (Makoto)

The fist that grasped her tightly, releases heat along with light, and explodes.

“Aaaaah!!”

A serious scream of pain.

This is the first time I have heard the voice of Sofia sounding like this.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

Looking at the fight occurring right in front of me, I felt fear.

An emotion close to pure terror.

Io who saw as if Raidou was being pushed back, decided to join the battle as well.

But, he was dealt with in an instant.

The strongest general from our prided army was.

It was something that happened not too long ago.

The hyuman shaped magic power of Raidou grew a third arm from around the armpit and grabbed Io, and just like that, it separated from the body and flew to the sky.

Io is unable to use teleportation.

I see. From a realistic standpoint, he has been shut out of this fight.

If Raidou uses a hand like that, Io has no way of doing anything against it. ＜Hehe, hand＞

If I go look for him, it might be possible to rejoin the battle, but it is a reality that 2 demon generals are unable to compare in any way.

It is simply a bad situation.

Just one thing, what I am hoping is that, Raidou's trump card is that magic power body.

It is certainly true that that thing is troublesome.

It's a mass of magic power that can even put spells to use. With a simple aria, it can activate the spells in an instant.

Moreover, as long as he has magic power, it seems like it can even regenerate.

Just by being able to construct such a magic power body, it is proof that he possesses an amount of magic power that rivals the scale of a country.

It doesn't seem like it is a pure object, so I don't know about the conversion performance, it might even be slightly better than the one I know of. But the truth is that, this is a literal threat.

"From the demon race experiments, a normal magician would have to use all its magic power just to make a single grain of sand. He is able to make such a mass and materialize it strongly enough to defend against attacks of a Dragon Slayer. In that case…" (Rona)

There's no doubt that it is an amount of magic power that she doesn't even feel like calculating.

But in the end, it is magic power.

If it is with my trump card, it is quite good against it.

Even if it's Raidou, there should be a way to fight it.

If it's now, I can also expect the support of Sofia.

That is exactly the reason why I am still here.

For the demon race, the Dragon Slayer and that boy will become a threat the moment they turn into enemies.

That's why, if I can eliminate at least one…

That's how it is.

It is originally a special attack of mine that needs the permission of my Lord before using, but as expected, right now I have no leeway to fill the forms.

Silently…

I begin my preparations.

I connect my aria and without the two noticing me…

"Rona, I don't know what you intend to do but, if you continue forming your spell… I will crush you" (Makoto)

"?!!"

Raidou!

That guy, at this distance…

Without even turning this way, he warned me.

Now that I remember, when we were confronting each other for fun at the academy, he was strangely able to predict my attacks.

Different from the other students, my habits shouldn't have been read, and yet…

I feel a cold sweat running down my spine.

Just a few days ago, the last time we talked and I thought he was as naive as always, in just that small amount of time, did something happen to Raidou?

I don't understand.

But, the reality that he made such a change is important.

At the very least, he is not someone that can be rolled in the palm of my hand at the battlefield anymore.

I send saliva to my dried throat.

It's completely dry.

I can feel the fear that I hadn't felt for so long swelling up inside me.

It wasn't the time to be concerned about this.

As if hiding the fact that I have yielded to fear, I began to line up several reasons to negate the antagonism towards him.

With thought transmission, I am able to grasp the general location of Io.

He has quite the distance, but it isn't at the level where I can't go look for him.

…

It is the time to step back.

If what Sofia says is true, she has the power of 4 superior dragons and has released the power to the point that her hyuman shape has begun to change.

Blade Dragon's sword, Fire Dragon's flame, Water Dragon's healing and support, Shadow Dragon's special ability.

It is certainly true that it is power that could bring down a country.

But with a fresh face and with literally no sweat, Raidou was confronting her.

He is also…

No, he is way too much of an unknown number.

At the very least, I have been underestimating him way too much.

“It was a joke, Raidou” (Rona)

“Ah, I see” (Makoto)

“… Your conditions were to give up on the hero and Stella Fortress, right? Okay. I don’t know about Sofia, but Io and I will accept those conditions. We will withdraw” (Rona)

“And the condition is?” (Makoto)

Raidou looks at me.

While confronting Sofia, he has the leeway to look away as many times as he wants.

To think it was to this extent…

“There’s no condition. You will meet with Demon Lord-sama, right?” (Rona)

“Of course. I do want to talk with that person at least once after all” (Makoto)

“Then that’s plenty enough. That girl is a vice-general, but doesn’t lead any army. I will be leaving her here but, you don’t mind, right?” (Rona)

“… I can’t assure you her safety” (Makoto)

“Okay. It seems like she doesn’t intend to stop fighting even after hearing this talk, so I will just accept it as an outcome of the battlefield” (Rona)

“Then go ahead. Let me tell you this just in case. If you intend to place a hand on the hero, Shiki is also outside” (Makoto)

“I am not so stupid. Well then, excuse me” (Rona)

Scary.

Leaving the place and heading to where Io was, this single thought surfaced in my mind.

Raidou is the Devil.

Even if it's not a name he called himself with, it is a nickname that truly fits him.

This is what I thought as I was finally able to wipe the sweat off my face.

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"… It looks as if the sword is adhered to your hand though?" (Makoto)

"This is originally like the crystallization of Mitsurugi's power. The stronger I release my dragon power like this, it turns closer and closer to fusing" (Sofia)

In the audience room that now only she and I remain, Sofia once again stands up, clads herself in blue light, and heals her wounds.

In those eyes, there's still fighting spirit.

"You know, why don't you leave that fighting of slowly shaving off your cards to someone that is weaker than you? Or are you thinking that I won't be killing you?" (Makoto)

If that's how it is, Sofia would be the naive one.

Because I do intend to kill her.

The moment she reacted to the name Shen, she revealed the intentions of devouring Tomoe as well.

Even if her ability is insufficient, there's no reason to let her leave.

"I am not in the age where I dream about fighting in a battlefield without being killed. You as well, aren't your attacks lacking in power more than the Empire's hero?" (Sofia)

The Empire's hero?

Why did his name come out so suddenly?

It seems like she let him go though.

“Who knows. I have never met the Empire’s hero. And there’s no need to decide the fight in one attack, right? Go ahead and utilize each one of your cards” (Makoto)

“… Just because you are in an advantage… you are being sarcastic… As I thought, that kid there was at least cuter than you” (Sofia)

“…”

“That kid’s attack was incredible you know? Shadow dragon and Water dragon; I was somehow able to endure it by utilizing two dragons at full power. It wasn’t to the point that I had to use this form, but it was higher than you though” (Sofia)

“…”

“He does think about his companions, and he also had the resolve to shave off his own life in order to reach his objective” (Sofia)

“…”

“If I was asked who I wanted to work together with—” (Sofia)

“I see. The Empire’s hero is surely impressive” (Makoto)

“What?” (Sofia)

“He was even able to use his charm power against an out of standard woman like you. On top of that, even if it was somewhat, he firmly left an impetus. If he meets you a number of times more, it may even reach perfection” (Makoto)

“?!”

It was as if she didn’t notice at all. Her expression dyes in surprise.

“Hahaha, you didn’t notice huh. It seems like you were unable to completely resist it, you know? Iya, as expected of a hero. If it were me, I wouldn’t even think about making you a companion”

(Makoto)

Finding a fragment of magic power that was confined inside of Sofia, I felt admiration.

To think that he was able to charm Sofia.

That Empire hero, he doesn't care as long as it is a beautiful girl?

I should properly make countermeasures so that it doesn't create victims at Asora as well.

If it's a power that can work even against Sofia, it is quite the threat.

"Ch-arm? Me? You, what are you…" (Sofia)

"You overlooked it huh. I wonder, maybe the true reason you didn't kill the hero was because you fell in love with him? Fufufu, a Dragon Slayer did" (Makoto)

"…"

"As a sign of pity, that charm, want me to dispel it for you?" (Makoto)

Even if she is charmed, it doesn't affect my battle with her.

But.

Seeing her flattering the Empire hero at random, she looked like a buffoon.

Sofia is not a threat that I need to stay cold to deal with.

Is it conceit, or maybe confidence?

I just felt pity for her.

"… Shut up" (Sofia)

"Sorry. I won't do anything strange. How about it, can you let me eliminate that charm? Dispel magic is safe magic you know?"

(Makoto)

“… I told you to shut up” (Sofia)

“And it seems like it is already something you can’t do by yourself after all. Even if you wait, it won’t turn into an advantageous development for you, you know?” (Makoto)

“That mouth of yours…” (Sofia)

“Hey” (Makoto)

The moment I was about to continue my words…

The back of Sofia burned.

No, it isn’t burning.

Flames shaped as dragon wings were spread.

“Shut it up!!!” (Sofia)

Her figure!

Teleportation?!

No… it is not!

It is simply at a speed I can’t catch with my eyes.

I look above.

A red trail as if drawing a line.

It is moving freely from left to right.

High speed movement.

So she still had such a card in hand huh.

She really does have a lot of tricks up her sleeve.

From several locations of the magic power body, the marks of cuts

and black stains were being left.

Sofia who talked a lot, at this moment, she continued her attacks without saying a word.

“… Fuh~”

“When Mitsurugi returns, you are done for” (Sofia)

Hm, she talked.

But, that’s off the point.

No, maybe the ‘others’ are just way too out of standards?

“Mitsurugi -Lancer – won’t be returning. If you who has the power of several superior dragons is only at this level, then… our Shiki is a lot stronger than that Lancer” (Makoto)

That’s right.

While receiving the slashes I can’t see, I held confidence and answered Sofia.

At the same time, I told Shiki who has been sending me thought transmissions several times to ask for permissions:

‘Do as you wish’

Chapter 160: Realizing he is the Devil, late night of autumn

At the center of the spacious room, there's an extravagant bed with canopy attached.

In the interior of this room that is fit for late nights, at times it would turn silent, and at others it was filled with a rattling sounds of hitting something and a high-pitched laugh.

"Fufufufu…. Incredible, this is incredible!! So this is an otherworlder. This is a human! It easily does things that I wouldn't be able to imagine!"

If the people who knew the usual him that is never perturbed by anything and always makes a gentle smile, and saw this scene of him flailing his legs and rolling his body left and right, they would be left speechless.

This place is his own room.

A boundary that he ordered no one to get close to.

The bedroom has soundproof applied, so this disgraceful behavior won't be heard on the outside.

He was like a kid.

The adventurer guild's master, Falz, real name Root. He was frolicking.

Before his very eyes, there's a faint glittering quadrilateral frame. It can be clearly seen that Root's excitement was coming from that.

"Makoto-kun should be in essence not human but hyuman though. Do all the people that live in the original world like the humans end up like this?! Ah~, I want to try this out no matter what. His child,

his possibilities, I want to bear it with this body of mine!!" (Root)

The square wasn't material, but an image.

An image floating in mid-air.

There, a bewildering scene changed continuously.

It's a terrible image that one can clearly affirm that it is the worst camera work ever.

Up, down, left, right; at a glance, it is something that can even be seen as a disorder.

It isn't something that one can properly watch at all.

Just one thing, no matter how crazily the image moves, a practically bluish hyuman figure can be seen at the center.

With that as the focus, it is the field of vision of something moving at high speed. That's how it felt.

But Root didn't make any complains about the image. He is just following it with his eyes as if having fun.

If he is actually able to understand the situation from this, he has terrifying dynamic vision.

For Makoto, what Root said would be quite unnerving, and the extend of the power is something to watch out for.

"I thought she was a boring irregular, but Sofia is also doing a good job. If she is able to somehow get through this situation, it would be fine to meet her at least once as a reward. Thanks to her I was able to see Makoto's power after all" (Root)

While concluding that it would be impossible for that to happen, Root says this.

The stage of that image is Limia Kingdom, the capital.

Well, even if it is, it has already lost its functionality as a town.

It is a terrible spectacle that would make the majority of people who see this, think in that way.

“This is it for the capital huh. But because of the interference of the Goddess, the life of the hero was saved, and the demon generals quickly left the stage. Because of the jumbled power, I am unable to tell where Tomoe and Mio are, but being able to see Makoto-kun, and while at it, Shiki as well, is sufficient. At the raise of the curtains, he rampaged with a hilarious armor, and after getting a good laugh out of it, he activated his real power! Not only do I not get bored, looking at you day by day is so fun I can’t help it. Just in what way did you reach to such a power?” (Root)

Root asks the hyuman shape cladded Makoto who is at the center of the image.

Bluish hyuman shape.

That is a magic power mass.

But it isn’t just magic power.

It is an application method of magic power that’s not magic, enabling it to do physical interference.

The demon race gave up and the hyumans gave up as well; a dead research.

When Root was clear about the power of Makoto, for a moment, his face turned expressionless, and then, as if eating it, he looked at that appearance.

Then, taking off his bathrobe and ending up naked, he began making a big uproar without caring about the time.

“One of alchemy’s special techniques, the formation of the philosopher’s stone. A easy to use catalyst that can even be called almighty. If it’s without any impurities, it would truly be the ‘Replenishing Drug Elixir’” (Root)

Root remembers something.

The philosopher's stone.

A secret high class catalyst that even among alchemists, only a few who have advanced their research by a considerable amount are able to understand.

If it's in a complete state, it possesses a different effect aside from being a catalyst and a medicine.

But well, there have been no stories of any hyuman creating a perfected philosopher's stone though.

Then why did Root reach that conclusion?

Because what Makoto did was sublimely disconnected from the normal path, and at the same time, it was showing incredible results.

And Root has connected this result with the term alchemy.

"For an alchemist, reaching the philosopher's stone is the most supreme objective of all. That's why researchers which are not limited only to alchemist, use this word to make comparisons with their own objectives. But well…" (Root)

Makoto revealed this to Root once.

That he wanted to increase the amount of magic power he had.

That he wants an appropriate way to release the magic power he retains.

Of course, Root who holds good will towards Makoto, introduced several methods to him.

But…

Frankly speaking, Makoto didn't have the qualities to do them.

That's why, even if he did the most efficient and harsh training that Root denoted, Root didn't expect more than 1/10 of the result a hyuman would show.

Repetition is power, but with that, one can't expect an immediate effect.

And then, at the summer vacation of the Academy, Makoto secluded himself in a place Root didn't know and continued his training.

It is a pity but, it isn't a task that can be accomplished in just a month, is what Root thought.

Putting effort doesn't turn into waste, and having Makoto reflecting and training was actually something desirable for Root, so he didn't really give any comments regarding this.

In this time, the task of Makoto was to increase the amount of magic power that can be seen in his spell.

"This is crazy. Personificating magic power to the outside and use it depending on the needs. The magic power that that hyuman shape is composed of, it is being maintained one step close to critical point of when a spell is being activated. It is true that at that exact moment, magic power is the closest to being physical, but the consumption is so bad that it isn't even worth the discussion. Even I wouldn't be able to maintain it for that long" (Root)

A really inefficient method of resolution.

Just how much magic power Makoto possesses?

Root once again evaluates that he has no upper limit.

—No way he doesn't have.

But even if he tries to calculate it into numbers, he thought that just by writing the zeros, he would get tired.

If it's only a small dose of materialization, Root thinks that he would be able to maintain it for several minutes, but he doesn't think that he would be able to do it like Makoto in practical use against Sofia, and with that amount nonetheless.

If you are going to use that amount of magic power, it would be

easier to just gather it from the surroundings and create a crater with it.

It is without doubt, an ability only Makoto would be able to use.

“Magic power at the verge of critical point and alters diversely. He gave concrete form to it and is actually using it for offense and defense, huh. When aiming to create the philosopher’s stone, it is something that creates a genuinely disarrayed chaos. But you were able to do exactly that. I can’t say which one is more amazing, but it is certain that it is totally crazy” (Root)

The image dyes in black.

In the second he turned his eyes away, it seems like Sofia had fallen to the ground.

The image that was coming out from her own field of vision, of course would black out the moment hers blacks out as well.

To think that the Myriad Colors dragon who Sofia is looking for, is actually using her as a substitute for a camera, there’s no way she would be able to imagine it.

This image is her field of vision.

But it shakes and jolts.

The sensation is close to that of a small sized camera fixed at one’s face.

He was unable to tell what was done to Sofia, but Root didn’t seem that regretful about it.

No, Root didn’t even hold any expectations that Sofia would put up a good fight.

For Sofia who only obtained the power of a few superior dragons, he knew that it wasn’t an opponent she could match. The moment Root saw that materialization of magic power, he was sure of it.

At the same time, Root felt pity towards the adventurer that holds

the alias Dragon Slayer.

If she were to know her place, if she didn't go scheming with Lancer and hunted the superior dragons, if she didn't try to challenge Root, if she only continued doing her activities as an adventurer, she would have lived her life as a winner and finish her life that way.

Well, now that it has come to this point, it is pointless talk already.

"Magic power edition 'Number One Origin, Materia Prima', is maybe how I should call it? If there's still no name yet, I should try proposing it. You will probably not understand those words and its meaning though. The creation theory you left for later and decided to run away from… right now, this boy was able to put it to practical use and even utilize it for physical labour. Even though you didn't even reach the general principle. Makoto-kun, you are truly the ideal hyuman I have depicted. The person I have imagined, tried to realize, and craved for, is already right in front of me. The core of my body is throbbing, melting… I feel like I will go crazy"

Root places a name to the power of Makoto which can be considered the pseudonym of chaos.

Without saying the true meaning of those words, just the heat of those words remained inside the room.

The image once again turns into the view from the sky.

Several red lights were shot towards the hyuman shape.

Even though they were being shot from different locations, they were all landing at the same sport of the hyuman shape.

Like a high-angle fire, she changes her trajectory and concentrates on one point of the hyuman shape as it is shot.

It is a deed that shows quite the high technique and concentration ability.

Even so, what Root was looking with his feverish eyes, was only Makoto who was enveloped by that hyuman shape.

In the middle of it, he changed his body to that of a woman and her body trembled.

Even though it is already reaching its resolution, it was as if he had completely forgotten about the variant strife that was occurring at Rotsgard.

Root passed a sleepless night.

Chapter 161: Shiki and the hyuman dragon

"… Even if you say dragon, the Nee-sans at Kuzunoha are more daunting. This isn't a big deal"

At the outsides of the castle where the flames were beginning to settle, several places of the Limia capital had smoke rising.

With the large quantity of light swords that rained down not that long ago, it seems like it had enough effect to control the battle between hyumans and demons.

The sounds of fight have stopped.

The expression of the man that was facing the giant shadow and spilling out abusive language, it was easy to tell that he was just trying to look tough.

He was standing on his two legs, but he was quite wounded.

(I totally agree)

At the words that the man squeezed out, the shadow standing at a mountain of rubble also agreed.

But this one was not a person.

A robe with glossy black and, while few, there were also gold threads added to it.

Just that, the body that was dressed in it, is a skeleton.

The hood that was covering its head was taken off and its cranium was laid bare.

The agreement of his was directed at the words itself, and it didn't

show a single sign of agreeing to the act of toughness of the hyuman male.

It's the servant of the devil that is currently fighting with Sofia at the audience room, Shiki.

After following the hero Hibiki, he was staring at the destruction the light swords created.

"It saved me the trouble though"

Shiki confirms from afar the hero party that's trying to stand up and somehow fix their stance.

But his gaze stayed the same.

It was clear where his interest was directed at.

The moment he said it saved him the trouble, what he glanced at was Hibiki and the others.

An adventurer that was heavily exhausted.

Hibiki who can be seen to be in the same state.

Using his sword as a cane to stand up, the knight Bredda.

The Lorel Priestess who is desperately trying to 'activate' healing magic, Chiya.

And then…

There was one more remaining that Shiki saw.

With a hole opened at his abdomen and prostrated on the ground, the magician Wudi.

Maybe it was a stray shot, or it might be because his defense was not enough.

Leaving the speculation aside, for Shiki who was thinking about leaving some of her companions half-dead because they are running wild too much, this situation where Hibiki and the others are

concentrating in defense and healing is quite ideal for him.

Truly saved him the trouble.

“The Lich huh. It doesn’t seem like you are sided with the demon race, but well, I will let you go. Leave”

“Superior Dragon Lancer. ‘Mitsurugi’. I didn’t think I would be the one meeting you” (Shiki)

A dragon that is larger than a watchtower was there.

Shiki knew that superior dragon, and yet, it doesn’t seem like he was scared.

Actually, it can even be seen as joy.

The hero party that screamed the name of their companion royal court magician, resounded in the background.

But it didn’t shake a single emotion from Shiki.

“… What is that stance?” (Lancer)

“My name is Larva. The servant of the Devil. Now that I say this, you should know my intentions right?” (Shiki)

“Devil… that kid, had his own troops?” (Lancer)

“You understand fast” (Shiki)

From the body of Lancer an overpowering aura comparable to a dragon’s roar leaks out.

It was something produced just by being aware of battle.

Without being bound by it, Shiki holds up his black staff.

Within the mist that was enough to cover the lower half of an adult, at the ruins of the capital destroyed by the light swords…

The fight between what is supposed to be only a mere high-ranked undead Lich, and the superior dragon Lancer, began.

“You bastard, it seems like you are without doubt the servant of the Devil. Seriously, you are a Lich only in name. Like a ‘servant’ disguising with the shell of a hyuman” (Lancer)

“Kukuku”

“But too bad. Even if you want to put up a fight, I am not just a simple superior dragon anymore. But really, for there to be a servant that has power comparable to that of a superior dragon, as expected of the Devil. Raidou is dangerous” (Lancer)

“…”

“You said your name was Larva, right? You see, I want to hurry and join Sofia, no, I want to kill the Devil with my own hands. That guy, even if it was temporary, he robbed me of one of my legs in the past” (Lancer)

Shiki continued his silence and Lancer continued his words. His form was showing a change.

The dragon body of his shrunk and turned into a hyuman shaped one.

It isn’t the childish body that he had before.

He now had the appearance of a slender faced youth of around 20 years old like Sofia.

Different from when he had the appearance of a kid that was exactly the same as a hyuman, at his white skin, there’s a tattoo-like pattern floating.

The pattern shines slightly and illuminates his appearance faintly, making his atmosphere feel like an illusion.

“‘I want to kill him’ That is what I should be saying, Lancer” (Shiki)

“You and that mouth of yours…” (Lancer)

After the words of Lancer, several light swords appear around Shiki as if surrounding him.

Practically at the same time they appear, a rain of swords attacks Shiki.

Shiki destroyed some of the swords with spells and secures an escape path, but unable to escape the explosion that the swords made after. He was blown away in the sky as if riding the wind.

Instead of calling it blown away, it was partly like he himself flew though.

“Larva-dono, release this mist. If you do that, we can fight as well. We can help you defeat that dragon” (Hibiki)

“Fuh, Limia hero, it seems like you are not properly seeing the situation. I am not really facing a hard fight here” (Shiki)

“… Yeah right. No matter how you try, you are just playing way too tough here” (Hibiki)

Shiki’s robe was quite damaged and was tattered already.

And, his opponent Lancer…

Had an even stronger power coming out of him from the shrunken hyuman body and standing as if nothing.

No matter who saw this, one can see that Shiki is the one in a predicament.

“I have received the permission of master. His leeway will be gone now” (Shiki)

“Master… that white guy. Larva-dono, let me tell you my honest feelings. That dragon that has made a mess out of this capital and killed a large amount of residents… let me defeat him alongside you” (Hibiki)

“… Your name was Hibiki, right? That’s impossible. From now on, I will have no leeway to mind you guys. Right now, even the barrier that is protecting you guys, I will most likely be unable to maintain it either” (Shiki)

“No way! If you release this now, the mist will kill Wudi-san!” (Chiya)

“Lorel’s priestess, there’s no need to worry about that. This mist will disappear soon. Not only that. I will give you guys an appealing proposition” (Shiki)

“An appealing… proposition?” (Hibiki)

Hibiki looks at the cranium where emotions can’t be seen, at its shining eyes.

Those eyes were looking at Lancer.

Even when he was talking, Shiki wasn’t looking at Hibiki and the others.

“Right. If you guys stay obedient, that magician there, I will save him later. Of course, with the condition that the priestess there is able to continue her healing though” (Shiki)

“?!! You will… save him?! An undead like you, save Wudi-san?! A living being?!” (Chiya)

Chiya’s surprise was quite a normal reaction.

Normally, an undead can’t use healing magic.

Only a very few number of undeads are able to, but they by nature hate living beings.

They hate the light of the living that they themselves have lost.

There’s no way they would actively take the role of saving the life of a living.

That’s why, for Hibiki and the others, Shiki’s proposition seemed odd.

It is for that reason that, not only Chiya, but everyone there had a surprised expression.

“Are you saying that you are surely able to safe Wudi in that state?”

“Of course. A mere thing like a fist sized hole at the abdomen, it is an easy job. In the first place, the line where we consider someone dead is different. Don’t put us at your same level. Now then, how about it? I have gone all the way and proposed this to you though?” (Shiki)

“… I will believe in those words of yours” (Hibiki)

“Hibiki!” (Bredda)

Bredda’s voice of caution.

“No, this is the correct answer. That dragon is not normal, but this guy is not normal either. The atmosphere he gives off is similar to a certain type of people. People that will do it when they say they will, that kind of people” (Hibiki)

“But!” (Bredda)

“Larva-dono, keep your promise” (Hibiki)

Hibiki once again tells Shiki words that meant her acknowledgement.

“The negotiation has been established then. ‘Mist Temple, Nivlheim’ cancel. Let me warn you. Try to at least protect your own body, okay?” (Shiki)

“… Understood” (Hibiki)

One ring disappears from Shiki’s fingers.

As if proving that it originated from a strange power, the mist rapidly dissipates.

“How stubborn. Well, getting you along with the whole hero party is fine as well. Perish with my genuine swords” (Lancer)

Lancer faces Shiki, no, he fires off several number of swords that were floating in the sky at different directions.

“… It seems like, it is time to exhibit my specialty. Hero, and also that knight and adventurer. Protect your body with everything you have. If you don’t want to die, that is” (Shiki)

It seems like Shiki has grasped the intention of Lancer’s action.

After a slight delay, a scream was heard.

“?!!”

“What!!”

“Just what in the world is going on?”

“Kukuku, if you are going to hate someone, hate these fools that have dared to stand in my way. You vessel swords, remnant of strong beings that didn’t die” (Lancer)

Answering the words of Lancer, the several light swords that were shot, once again float in midair.

No, they were not light swords.

Red, black, silver, white… and also normal swords.

Swords that had substance were floating there.

“… Blade Dragon, Lancer. But that body of yours is a hybrid that holds two lives. A hyuman dragon, or maybe a dragon kin? I see, Root-dono’s words were truly correct. Your power has increased when you took that form” (Shiki)

“!! Root! You bastard, why do you know that name?!” (Lancer)

“Surrounded by many famous swords, the supreme dragon called ‘Mitsurugi’. The true form of those swords are the outcome of the strong beings you have turned into swords” (Shiki)

Shiki indifferently talks.

“… I can’t let you live huh” (Lancer)

“Hmph. People that challenged you themselves, strong beings that

you had taken an interest in; you turned the tables on them and increased your own collection. Being able to reside in a place close to people must have truly been 2 birds with 1 stone huh" (Shiki)

"Lich… you said your name was Larva, right? You and that hero as well… turn into a part of my power!" (Lancer)

The swords plunge at Shiki all at once.

"'Clad this body of mine in malice' Groth. Shia, 'the drifting silver cage that wipes out arrows' Madhugiri" (Shiki)

Gently walking forward.

With his specialty of using soul language, he loudly clacks the aria and approaches Lancer at high speed.

In a quite short aria, Shiki's body is clad in something dark red, and on top of that, several ripples were created.

7 of the 10 swords were pursuing Shiki.

An attack that doesn't aim at a place but at an individual.

But Shiki didn't stop.

From the front, the sides, and also the rear; ignoring the swords that were drawing near, he thrusts his staff at Lancer.

"You bastard!" (Lancer)

Just before a number of the swords hit Shiki, the ripples got in their way.

After that, Shiki activates the spell he was chanting his aria for.

The swords distorted heavily and disappear at random directions.

The two remaining swords collide with the dark red coating and slowly corrode.

The shock of the big light that occurred from behind, reached even at the place where Shiki and Lancer were.

It must have been the other three swords that attacked Hibiki and the others

"… I am truly lucky. Because something as convenient as this is actually happening after all. The Dragon Slayer Sofia and the superior dragon Lancer that holds the alias Mitsurugi; your sin of injuring one of our own, Tomoe-dono and Mio-dono would have killed you without remorse. I am truly… lucky" (Shiki)

"Killing me? Just because you have escaped my true swords once, you dare get so ahead of yourself!" (Lancer)

The thrusted staff was Shiki's late declaration of war.

Lowering his staff, Shiki gets happy about his luck as if monologuing.

"And, you are unlucky. I have investigated you well. By having a bit of cooperation from what can be called the dragon's chief, Root-dono" (Shiki)

"Root! So you bastard really do have a connection with that guy. In that case, the Devil also…" (Lancer)

"I think that the strongest weapon people possess is 'comprehension'. I am a 'former' hyuman, but… I will proof this by slaying a dragon" (Shiki)

"This is a battlefield. There are elites in the demon race, and in the adventurers of Tsige there are some as well. There are still many casks of strong beings. That composure of yours, I will soon erase it!" (Lancer)

"'*Number 6 is my fittest…'*" (Shiki)

"!!"

"'*Free yourself from your scabbard and become your true form',* come… *Ascalon*" (Shiki)

Shiki holds the staff with both hands as if brandishing a sword.

It is a black staff that has few decorations, but with a light similar to that of a red moon, it changed its appearance and becomes a giant great sword.

Claymore.

And quite the big one too.

“You bastard, weren’t you a magician?” (Lancer)

“I am a magician. That recognition is correct. This is a sword smeared with poison and malediction, Ascalon. With my desires of one day being able to hunt you down, I have given this sword the name of a Dragon Slayer after all” (Shiki)

“Poison huh. It is certainly true that it doesn’t have the radiance of a legendary sword. Not even a ghostly aura” (Lancer)

“That’s fine. I am the one using it, so a beautiful legendary sword doesn’t fit me” (Shiki)

Leaving the point of the sword on the ground, Shiki holds the claymore with both hands.

If it were a strong swordsman, that stance there would be inviting for a swipe to break his stance.

“It is not a sword that a magician can use. If that’s your weapon, your choice was a mistake” (Lancer)

“Six step ‘*Fray*’ release. ‘*Sword Emperor Possession, Sword Spirit Em*’” (Shiki)

Lancer jumps instantly.

Firing light swords disorderly to the surroundings, he gathers a number of physical swords around him.

“For a magician to challenge me with a sword, what mockery!” (Lancer)

“Swords created from the life of mobs, are no match for Ascalon

and Fray. Taste it plenty, the fear of death" (Shiki)

From the whole body of Shiki, a dark red power swells up.

The moment that power reached the tip of the sharp Ascalon, Shiki roars, and instantly closes the distance that Lancer still had left.

At exactly the range of the giant great sword that one wouldn't be able to measure with one's eyes unless they normally utilize it.

The bony arms made a reverse swing with Ascalon and aim at Lancer's neck.

Several swords made a high-speed automatic defense in between the giant and Lancer, but they were being destroyed one after the other and were unable to accomplish their job.

"Gugh?!"

Lancer himself was only able to make a momentaneous reaction and retreat from that location. He could only take distance.

His voice didn't leak only because of that.

His right hand was dripping with blood.

"If I remember correctly, you bastards cut off the fingers of my master… right? How is it, does it hurt?" (Shiki)

Seeing that he received exactly the same injury as Makoto, Shiki asks him.

"You… bastard… Unforgivable!!" (Lancer)

"I feel exactly the same. What a coincidence" (Shiki)

After joking, he aims at Lancer with Ascalon.

In the moment of contact, a strong light was produced.

"This is quite the different disposition of sword. Ah, it is from your collection huh. As expected of a sword used by past heroes. A wondrous sword you have there" (Shiki)

“That’s not all!” (Lancer)

A red light comes out from inside Lancer’s mouth.

Immediately after, a light streak was fired at point blank range towards Shiki.

That was something that resembled the laser-like attack of Sofia.

“Wa?!”

Shock.

That voice leaked out from Lancer.

“What’s wrong? I am a magician, it is obvious that I will have a barrier spread, right?” (Shiki)

The light bundle that was supposed to go straight ahead, was refracted and disappeared into the sky.

A giant great sword not fit for magicians, a firm and skilfull barrier not fit for swordsmen.

Lancer who was healing the injuries of his fingers, was slowly falling into chaos.

“Well then, let’s continue” (Shiki)

The lights of Shiki’s hollow eye cavities grew stronger.

Upper, center, lower; at times he would even appear at the back and do an attack as if striking by surprise.

Shiki was perfectly utilizing the weight of the claymore, and doing a sword dance that showed no openings.

The light swords imprisonment and the physical swords showed powerlessness akin to leaves.

The swords that were floating around Lancer and seemed to have special characteristics, were desperately trying to protect their master.

"'*Being true to yourself is the light of life*' Stavelot" (Shiki)

"You bastard, in between this battle of weapons you are inputting a spell aria?!" (Lancer)

The darkness Shiki created that was deeper than night itself attacks Lancer.

From an outsider's point of view, there wasn't much change, but the movements of Lancer had dulled.

But for the related party, it was quite a weakening that can't be joked of.

"'*Sword that seeks its own return*' Rot Counter" (Shiki)

Purposely not repelling the sword that was about to reach him, Shiki once again forms a new spell in a calm manner.

The sword teared against the dark red aura that covered Shiki, but without being able to injure his body, it made a high-pitched sound and breaks.

As if it cut itself.

"You broke the sword of a hero?!" (Lancer)

"I will be breaking several more until your end, but I don't think you have the leeway to count every single one of them though" (Shiki)

While feeling exaltation, and yet, still able to maintain calm, Shiki's movements were quite the unnatural ones.

Two things that require extreme concentration to perform, and he was able to perform both at the same time.

Sword and spell.

Even the only spectators in that place, the hero party, were clearly able to tell that.

Even when they are looking from a slightly far away location, they could understand that Shiki was overwhelming Lancer, and were looking at a fierce battle from inside their barrier.

While spreading a barrier, they perform healing.

With just that, Chiya seemed like she was already unable to think properly. And seeing Shiki who was able to make more than two spells in the midsts of that dance of blades, she understood that he was abnormal.

It was as if his ‘body and spirit were moving as different entities’. Transcendental movements that can even make someone feel bad.

A superior dragon that is called the world’s highest ranked.

Hibiki and the others were simply looking at how that notion was crumbling.

Chapter 162: The conclusion outside the castle

(Tch)

Shiki made a heartfelt click of tongue because, even if this was within anticipation, it was still heading at a considerably bad direction.

The true swords that Lancer was creating improvised, were already calculated by Shiki.

It depended on the situation of the surroundings, but he has already inputted the fact that Lancer's fighting potential increases at random.

But that performance was quite high.

The real body itself has skills that Shiki had to revise his own evaluation quite a bit.

The reason was easy to understand.

Because in this capital, there's the elite army that Io led, and the adventurers that came from Tsige.

As if each sword held a will of its own, Shiki was unable to differentiate between which sword was attacking him.

But still, among those, there are times when a sword made from a hero as material was mixed in the group, and its power surpassed that of the rest. Shiki was suffering.

From an outside perspective, it looked like Shiki was at an overwhelming advantage.

Even Lancer who was holding his ground, has fallen in shock at this

situation and has already lost his composure.

Just as Shiki planned.

But the truth is different.

Shiki had already controlled the flow of the battle and taken the initiative, not showing a single restraint and charging forward.

To the point that the saying: ‘No need to think of later’, was quite fitting.

That’s why it looked like the fight was overwhelming.

(Even so, I won’t let it even smell like a hard fight and kill him. This Mitsurugi alone, as long as I have named myself as the servant of Waka-sama, I can’t show an unsightly performance) (Shiki)

The difference in ability between Shiki and Lancer wasn’t that much.

If Lancer was a simple superior dragon, that is.

He offsetted the darkness that Shiki emitted, spouted out quite the powerful flames, weakened the effect of the poisons that he was afflicted with, and at times even completely neutralizing them, Lancer was, frankly speaking, too much of an opponent for Shiki.

In terms of instantaneous fighting power, Shiki would be able to rival him.

But even with this, it wasn’t an advantage that can win him the fight.

Because he would only be lining up by doing his maximum in an instant after all.

Truly an all out.

Lancer's sword and spells, his special tactics; Shiki was shutting them out with the countermeasures he had thought out in advance.

At times increasing his power to the very limits at the last moment, he dealt with it without showing any agitation.

Attacks with crazy might that would certainly turn the flow of the battle, were being deflected in the midst of this sword dance with a nonchalant face.

The blaze that came out from Lancer's mouth was a high density flame that Shiki didn't expect as a threat, but even so, he immediately coped with it.

An attack that even if it hit, it would still be possible to continue battle, but he didn't even let those kind of attacks go through.

Shiki did all that and had overwhelmed Lancer in all senses.

This wasn't a feat that could be done unless you habitually fight with opponents stronger than yourself.

Shiki has evaluated his master Makoto as stronger than Lancer.

It is true that Lancer has grown slightly stronger since the time he battled with Makoto.

Because with the varied fighting methods and judgment Shiki has, he would be able to fight in quite the advantage against opponents with the same ability.

However, with the current Lancer that has the power of other superior dragons like Sofia, the story is different.

As a result, the words of Makoto were off, but because of Shiki's fine play, in terms of result, this situation is the most favorable.

In other words…

It would be one thing if it were within expectations, but Shiki has to finish this before something out of expectations happens, or he won't have any chance of winning.

The poison of Ascalon is slowly eating into the body of Lancer.

It must have surpassed his healing and curing powers.

A part of his right hand has turned into stone, and there were spots in his body that were visibly dark red.

He was certainly cornering Lancer.

(Please don't notice. Just like this, die!!) (Shiki)

It is simple luck that Lancer has still not noticed yet. Shiki understood this.

"It would be one thing if it were the Devil itself, but for his mere servant!!" (Lancer)

Lancer was also desperate.

The number of swords was innumerable, and aside from swinging, there were also others who were used simply as piercing projectile weapons.

His ability to control all of those at once is also plenty monstrous.

Shiki's sword clashes with Lancer's.

Shiki's spells clashes with Lancer's spells.

They respectively clashed.

Sword and spell.

In a few, Shiki had an edge.

That's why the equilibrium broke, and the one who ended up wounded was Lancer.

Even in swordsmanship, Lancer was also the one being crushed.

The battle was slowly drawing to a conclusion.

“Ooooh!!”

Gu–gin!

A horizontal slash. What Ascalon caught was not the abdomen, but the leg.

It cut off the leg of Lancer that was jumping.

Shiki was going to decide the battle here, but because of the voice that came from the back, he stopped his charge.

He must have read wrong, is what Shiki thought for a moment.

Slowly turning…

“No well, it seems that wasn’t the case. Looks like luck is still on my side” (Shiki)

It was a matter of chance.

‘If Lancer were to notice it’, that kind of probability.

Shiki won the gamble.

A male stretched his arm and moved his mouth to tell something to Shiki.

The adventurer of Tsige.

He probably was an acquaintance of Tomoe and Mio at some point, but for Shiki, it was the first time meeting him.

However, there was too much distance.

The words that were his testament were unable to reach Shiki.

His body was pierced by the light swords.

The barrier was destroyed.

And maybe she was pushed away, the Lorel Priestess Chiya was on the ground.

(He covered for her huh. I appreciate it, adventurer. If that girl or the hero were to turn into swords, I would have lost) (Shiki)

The new barrier that Chiya created, Shiki disguised it so it looked as if he himself had created that barrier.

He made it look like the barrier that has been repelling all the light swords of Lancer.

In truth, the barrier that Chiya spread didn't have the defensive power to continuously block the light swords.

If the attacks were to concentrate, it wouldn't even last for one minute before being destroyed.

If it is from a physical sword, it might even break in one attack.

But if it's something Shiki has spread, it would be a different story.

And in truth, it has been able to block the attack of 3 physical swords at the same time.

After showing this to Lancer, Shiki dissolved the barrier he made.

Against Lancer, he had no leeway to create a firm barrier that is not for his use.

He cut one of his cards to grab the attention of Lancer and made it seem as if the barrier Chiya created was the same as the ones he has been creating until now.

It was a trivial thing similar to an amulet, but it seems like Hibiki and the others understood its meaning, they didn't make any mention of it and were somehow able to properly convey the plan of Shiki.

After that, Lancer's physical swords were practically all gathered towards Shiki, and a situation where Hibiki and the others were attacked and become the power of Lancer, was avoided.

The hero and the priestess.

For Shiki, these two turning into swords would be the worst scenario.

He doesn't know how much power that would give Lancer.

Moreover, one of them was left in his hands by Makoto, so it is a scenario that must be avoided at any cost.

From what Shiki has seen of Hibiki, she is not a girl that would be so easily defeated, but when he actually heard her scream, he felt insecure of this.

Luck is at my side, is what Shiki confirms as the safety of the hero and the priestess were reflected in his eyes.

At the same time, he once again felt the strong need to decide the battle this moment.

"Tch!! I missed! But with this guy I will!!" (Lancer)

Lancer didn't show even a single shred of remorse at the fact that he tried to assassinate a young girl.

It seems like he lost his ability to regenerate his leg, he was using a sword as substitute for a cane.

The adventurer was wrapped in light and was taken in by the swords. As he himself turned into a new sword, it turned and flies at high speed towards Shiki.

From Lancer's back, several tens of swords float and turn towards Shiki.

Moreover, as if surrounding Shiki, physical swords and light swords appeared.

"… Hoh~ so even you can tell huh? That this is the decisive moment" (Shiki)

"I have never been this cornered since the time with Sofia. Turn

into a good sword and serve under me!!” (Lancer)

“Who would serve under someone like you. I have already found someone to serve!!!” (Shiki)

Shiki who had Ascalon thrusted out, fired off several spells as he charged against Lancer.

Lancer and the many swords meet that attack.

Two shadows overlap.

A shockwave and a sword rain blew violently, destroying the surroundings.

“A mutual defeat?”

“No, Larva-dono’s lost… eh?”

After the instantaneous-like destruction, Bredda muttered mutual defeat, but Hibiki denied it.

But soon after, words of doubt leaked out.

From the scene she and the others see… there’s a man that is missing one leg, and a Lich standing just in front of him.

The Lich has an innumerable amount of swords piercing his body and remained standing with an abnormal appearance.

That’s right. Just like Hibiki stated, it looked like Larva lost.

The reason it doesn’t look like a mutual defeat is because Ascalon is not piercing Lancer.

But that Ascalon is also the reason Hibiki was in doubt.

There nothing held at the Lich’s hands.

“Kukukuku! Did you see that, servant of the Devil?! This is the reason the dragons rule, this is why they rule the world of the stron —” (Lancer)

It seems like Lancer was unable to see Ascalon.

Looking at the Lich that had lost the light in his eyes, he must have felt certain of his victory. He voiced out triumphantly…

And became the last words of Lancer.

"!!!"

From Hibiki's eyes, the giant sword was reflected.

Ascalon.

The falling body of Lancer indicated that the sword had fulfilled its task.

What that girl saw at the back of Lancer, there, the shadow of a person with long red hair was there.

Not even knowing about his existence until now, Hibiki saw a young slender man holding a black great sword.

"Who… are you?"

"… Pathetic. But right now this is my all huh. 'Sword Emperor Possession' cancel" (Shiki)

While looking down at the body of Lancer that was dispersing like dust, Shiki mutters.

It was at a volume that couldn't be heard.

While exposing this body, Shiki walks towards the location of Hibiki and the others.

The black great sword Ascalon had returned to being a black staff with few decoration.

This exterior appearance that was disguised with the form of a Lich.

Using the short distance teleportation that he never showed Lancer not even once, he made a direct hit with Ascalon.

For Shiki, it was a paper-thin victory.

Instantly blaming his own lack of power, Shiki returned to where Hibiki and the others are.

“Are you… Larva-dono?” (Hibiki)

“What?!”

“Eh, are you kidding?”

The doubtful words that Hibiki said, made Bredda and Chiya react.

For this mysterious person to be the same as the Lich, in the common sense of this world, it was hard to believe.

The line of the living and the undead is not something that can be crossed at will after all.

Even if he is holding the same weapon, for the common sense of hyumans, it would be impossible to imagine.

It is because Hibiki basically still had the way of thinking of her previous world that she was able to notice.

(An otherworlder huh. A hero is troublesome) (Shiki)

While thinking this way at Hibiki who easily connected his identity, Shiki returns to where Hibiki and the others are.

‘So you can return to your previous form’ is what his master said in the past, so he is the same as her. Shiki was surprised that this people have quite the extraordinary conception.

For Shiki, this is like putting on a substitute for armor, so if he were asked if he is actually back to the living, in essence, it is different.

But this also can’t be considered at the level of clothes.

And there’s no problem in having his master think that he can

return.

Shiki thought that there's no need to unnecessarily explain those details.

"Normally, it isn't something that can be so easily noticed though. Honestly, counting the disgrace from just now and this, my head is even hurting" (Shiki)

Shiki regrets the fact that he had to expose this appearance.

"You were a hyuman huh" (Hibiki)

"Fuh~ in a distant past that is. Priestess, move aside. I will keep my promise" (Shiki)

"Eh? Ah, okay" (Chiya)

"Fifth step 'Keto' release. At worst, if at the very least his soul is still floating around here, something can still be managed.*'Silver Arm, Agat Arm', Supplement my healing"* (Shiki)

A new ring is fit onto Shiki's finger.

A yellow colored light overflowed from the ground and envelops Wudi.

Hibiki and the others reflexively gulp their breath.

With Chiya's healing, the hole had closed, but the color of his skin that showed no signs of recovering, turned from ashen to a normal color.

Shortly after, his chest clearly went up and down and returned into calm breathing.

"It should be fine with this. After this, just make sure he reposes" (Shiki)

Chiya nods at Shiki's words.

"You saved us, Larva-dono. I will give my thanks at a future date"

(Bredda)

“I will consider it” (Shiki)

“… Servant of the Devil, those words… should I take those words in literal meaning?” (Hibiki)

“So you heard what Lancer said. Forget those words” (Shiki)

“Don’t ask for the impossible” (Hibiki)

“In this terrible scene, even if few in numbers, there are voices asking for help. Residents that evacuated, that are holding uneasiness. Instead of being concerned about me, you should have many other things to do, right?” (Shiki)

(Kugh, as expected, I have used the rings a bit too much huh. That damn Lancer, he really did give me a hard time. With this, even if I return to Waka-sama, I would only serve as an hindrance. I have to rest for a bit) (Shiki)

“This time you won’t stop us?” (Hibiki)

“I won’t help you either though” (Shiki)

In this situation, the only thing that could be a threat for Hibiki would be Sofia, is how Shiki thinks.

And his master Misumi Makoto is there.

At this terrible scene of the capital that has made both armies unable to continue battle because of the rain of light swords, and on top of that, Lancer and Shiki fought; no matter if it’s to find any survivors or to escape, there would be no one who would blame Hibiki, is what Shiki has concluded.

“This is something Bredda said as well but, I will definitely give my gratitude in the future” (Hibiki)

“Fumu. Then, I will be keeping that in mind” (Shiki)

“Hibiki, first let’s find a place for Wudi to rest. At the outside of the

town, there's already several camps being set. That place should work" (Bredda)

Bredda shoulders Wudi.

Hibiki glanced at Shiki once, but without turning back a second time, she left running.

(The last words of the man that was turned into a sword. And the previous words of him when he said 'that person resembles those people'. It feels like it associates with Tsige. Also, the swordsmanship of the devil's servant named Larva, the sword was different, but his style was similar to my sensei. To a level that I can't think of it as a coincidence. Also, the devil, that white person wearing a special effect hero suit. There's a high chance that Larva and the Devil have some sort of connection with an otherworlder. Tsige, otherworlder, and that abnormal strength. Maybe… Kuzunoha Company is related to this? Then is that white guy, Raidou? But Mio-san was not there. The other close aide called Tomoe-san was not there either. A name like Kuzunoha only exists in Lorel so, it slightly bothers me… I don't think that it is completely unrelated though) (Hibiki)

Chapter 163: Everything without a trace

“Ahahaha!!”

“Did you go crazy?” (Makoto)

“No way. Just that, there were two things that made me laugh, that’s all” (Sofia)

“Hah?” (Makoto)

I spontaneously make a voice of amazement.

Even when I dispelled the charm, it just made her not talk about the Empire hero anymore, but her personality didn’t change that much.

She is still emitting blood thirst, and yet, she suddenly began laughing.

‘Did she go crazy?’ is what I thought.

But right after, I could tell that the power of the laughing Sofia was showing a change.

I see.

At the very least, she has a basis for it huh. It is not like she went crazy.

“The first one is that, my so called companion died in a truly fast and easy way” (Sofia)

“Lancer died huh” (Makoto)

I haven’t extended my [Sakai] to where Shiki is, so I don’t know if what she is saying is true though.

Well, there's no way Shiki would lose.

But to be able to do the killing blow as well. Shiki has gotten stronger than I thought.

"The other is that, the gamble was as expected, my win. I was amazed by how strong my own luck is" (Sofia)

"Gamble? With Lancer?" (Makoto)

She hasn't done a gamble with me.

There's already nothing I want to test with her.

If she intends to do something, it is fine to watch what she will do, but I should put a finish to it soon.

"Yeah. If I die before him, I would become a part of his collection. If he were to die first, he will give me the remaining life he has. That kind of gamble" (Sofia)

Remaining life.

Lancer has several lives.

"… And, you who has won the gamble and received that life, what is it you can do? That sword and that dragon power, you can already tell that they are completely not up to par, right?" (Makoto)

Having Lancer's power dwell in her at this late in time, just what would she be able to do?

Even if her sword gets slightly stronger, even if the teleportation with the light swords gets slightly better, there's absolutely no point.

"… Ah, it isn't something that makes me laugh, but there's another thing that I have noticed" (Sofia)

"Hm?" (Makoto)

The joy in her expression was gone, but Sofia continues talking.

I will wait for you, so you don't need to buy time in this way.

I sighed.

"I did this quite a lot in the past, but you know, people that fight while looking down on their opponent… are really disgusting. I have reflected on this" (Sofia)

"I see" (Makoto)

So you say.

I don't know if she is trying to provoke me here but, right now I am able to hold the reins of my heart to a certain extent.

The conclusion of this battle as well, and its result, will most likely be reached in a quite plain manner.

This cold emotions that even felt extreme, this battle thoughts of mine, there's no problem with it.

I think that this is simply a mental state I reach when I am fighting.

I can move like a soldier as if flipping a switch, that's all.

This thing that is inside of me is probably a habit of mine.

It isn't something special or anything like that.

I have experienced fights of life and death in practically a daily basis, so I probably just adapted to it.

It is not that there's another person inside of me.

I am slightly able to accept this.

No matter what Sofia says, just like how my magic power body doesn't let attacks reach me, I am able to take everything by surface and ward it off.

"And, those kind of people let down their guards. That's why I was able to make it in time. Let me show it to you then; the trump card that overwhelmed two superior dragons and killed them" (Sofia)

“The strong will control the battlefield and will act as they please. I actually think that this is providence though. Is it negligence?” (Makoto)

“Even now, you are not even trying to stop me. If that’s not negligence and conceit, what would it be?” (Sofia)

“… Leeway?” (Makoto)

There was no answer from Sofia.

In exchange, a nauseating richly colored area was spread on the floor and was expanding with her as the center.

Before long, it also reached my feet and it was even stretching up to the sky.

When I thought just how far it would expand, it didn’t cover the whole space of what was once the audience room, and its expansion stopped.

A space that is not kind to the eye.

Right after an impression I didn’t place much interest in, an ear-piercing sound as if nails were scraping glass resounded heavily in the place.

The richly colored area broke and scattered, and it returns to the scene of the audience room.

But, this is…

As if affirming my guess, from Sofia’s feet, no, from every part of the sky, swords began appearing one after the other.

Each one of them were swords with different design.

The similarity they shared was that they were swords and that it was clearly visible that they were quite the quality swords.

It is a line up of swords that seemed as if someone ransacked the smithy of an elder dwarf.

“Welcome to the cage of swords. This is the place where Lancer stores the swords he gathers. And, it is also an execution ground” (Sofia)

Sofia’s fearless smile.

“Impressive. You brought me to an isolated space” (Makoto)

“It was just shifting it slightly though. But the entertainment it provides is plenty, so don’t worry” (Sofia)

“No no, just forcefully bringing someone to another space, it is a first for me. No well, putting aside an exception, I have almost never experienced this. Even if it is small, it is quite impressive” (Makoto)

Sofia silently closes her eyes and breathes in largely.

Ignored huh.

But even Tomoe was unable to do it, so this is quite considerable. Seriously.

Was that ear-piercing sound the moment when the space got shifted?

What’s amazing is that from what I see, it is as if we were still in the same place.

This might be the first time today that I have felt admiration towards Sofia.

She didn’t attack me immediately, so I decided to use [Sakai] to understand the characteristics of this space.

“Increases the power of the one that deploys it. But what’s best at is… the cohabitation of swords and life?” (Makoto)

“That’s not on the level of a revelation. Did you do something?” (Sofia)

“Well a bit here. So all the swords here are the life of Sofia. That it

produces infinitely depending on one's worth, quite the unpleasant power there" (Makoto)

From the stocked swords here, I can feel the pulsation of life.

It is as if the swords and her are sharing lives.

Looking at her reaction, it seems I am not wrong.
"… A thousand and eighty. They are not infinite" (Sofia)

"Seems to be slightly fewer than that though. There must have been many used when Lancer was fighting Shiki" (Makoto)

It is a magnificent view as well. A splendid power there.

Thinking about the individual battle prowess of Sofia, fighting infinitely in this place, even superior dragons would not like it.

On top of that, in the first time I fought with her, she already had the Waterfall dragon. In other words, she first obtained the power of the dragon that was specialized in healing.

I feel sympathy towards Darkness Clad and Crimson Light.

"It doesn't change the fact that we will continue this dance of swords until you die" (Sofia)

"But too bad. At the very end, you brought the worst power you could have brought out, Sofia" (Makoto)

Towards the Dragon Slayer that had taken two swords in hand, I announced this.

I probably did a heartfelt expression of pity there.

Sofia didn't do any refutation, and in exchange, she stared at my left hand.

"Raidou, what is that?" (Sofia)

"Things like warrior or magician; they are wrong, totally wrong, Sofia. You see, I am…" (Makoto)

I turn my left hand towards her.

While still holding it.

My weapon that I took from a different space a few moments ago.

In this place, in this space that Sofia has created and reigns over, I am able to do this.

It feels as if I am putting Asora into practical use and I do feel bad about it.

“Aaaah!!!” (Sofia)

Must have been her instinct.

With wide opened eyes, Sofia roars.

In a speed that can be compared to that of a bullet, she cuts towards the magic power body.

Heh~, the strength is high.

Then…

I will change [Sakai] to enhancement.

The magic power body that was sharply torn up by Sofia was instantly regenerated to the point that it was practically not injured anymore.

After confirming this and nodding, I take a white arrow in my right hand similar to the bow I have.

And then, I fix the arrow to the string.

Sofia continued her attack from the sky. Her eyes not straying from my left hand in any moment.

“This is… Azusa. My weapon. The craftsmen that made this were adamant in having me place a name to it, you see. And so, I have given it the same name of an ancient bow. It is called Azusa Yumi” (Makoto)

I pour a massive amount of magic power to the bright white arrow in my right hand.

Steadily turning its color to pink, and then, turning into a deeper red.

It is an arrow made from the same material as my ring Draupnir.

This is what I thought when I obtained this magic power body.

If I can't construct a spell by using a massive amount of magic power at once, I just have to accumulate it.

That it is fine to just use what's accumulated.

Even if there's a limit to how much can be accumulated, the power of this arrow that has turned completely red is a lot stronger than any magic I can use.

"Aaaahhh!!"

As if being manipulated by her will, the other swords aside from the ones in both her hands, began to attack me as well.

Slash, stab, swipe, rain incessantly.

Attacks that showed no mercy.

Within all that, Sofia was skilfully evading her own attacks while flying around, changing her position, and continuing her attacks.

She is even bringing out spells. She was literally utilizing everything she had.

Doesn't matter.

A bow that is unusual in this world. I utilize a form of holding the bow that I am accustomed to and draw Azusa to its very limit.

If I have to kill you over a thousand times before this ends, I just need to do this all at once.

These swords and Sofia as well; I will vanish everything in this one

attack.

“Raidooooou!!!” (Sofia)

I eliminate Sofia from my field of vision.

I close my eyes and turn silent.

Even if you get impatient now, it is already too late.

“O bow of Azusa, draw forth and bind the spirits wicked… Just kidding. I only have vague memories of it though” (Makoto)
＜Thanks to Darkslime for the help in translating this part＞

“You, you are—-!!” (Sofia)

She herself secluded us in this small place.

There’s already no escape.

There’s no need look at Sofia who is trying to confuse me by flying everywhere.

Just by hitting something, the attack will reach this whole space after all.

I slowly open my eyes.

“I am an archer. Name is Misumi Makoto. It would be pitiful to shout out a fake name in your last moments right, Sofia?” (Makoto)

“I still haven’t… that guy… Root… I have not even met the harmony supreme dragon yet!!! Like hell I will die!!” (Sofia)

Even though I went out of my way to tell her my name.

She ignored it.

“You are talking about Root huh. Harmony, you say. I feel like chaotic would fit him more. But, how laughable. You haven’t even noticed that the person himself is using you as a substitute for a camera” (Makoto)

“?!!”

Not only is he not giving her any attention, she is even being used, and she didn’t notice until her last moments.

I feel like, conspiring to fight with Root is also a mistake, but the result of her challenge was quite the unsightly thing.

And that title of Dragon Slayer as well.

“Goodbye, Sofia Blue. Ah, Root, you owe me one, okay?” (Makoto)

“!!!”

A glance.

As if looking deep into the eyes of Sofia, I told that pervert that is definitely watching this live feed.

Pointing towards a random sword stabbed in the ground, I fire my red dyed arrow.

The arrow that went through the magic power body destroyed the sword and made a high-pitched sound.

The bright red light of destruction that was flooding this small space was rapidly filling it up and vanishes the large amount of swords that existed within it.

It obviously touched the surface of my magic power body and slowly scraped it off, but it didn’t reach all the way inside.

The part where the arrow passed through has already been closed.

No mistake.

But different from me, the screams of anger and agitation of Sofia were resounding.

But it didn’t change anything.

Soon her body was engulfed by that light and her voice abruptly stopped.

It happened soon after. The space she created made a breaking sound similar to glass and was destroyed.

In the silent audience room where no one is present, there's only me with my bow.

Plain, huh.

You were also the same.

The scent of the wind that was different from a few moments ago helped me confirm that I have returned.

… I noticed that Root was looking at me at around the time when Sofia began flying around the sky.

Peeping.

I was surprised but, it is Root.

I don't know what connection Sofia had with Root, or for what reason she showed so much attachment towards him.

I actually don't have much interest in it, but it feels like it might serve to pester Root, so I will talk to him about it at a later time.

As an apology for the habitual perverted utterances he does.

"Next is… the Stella Fortress huh" (Makoto)

Going there is such a pain.

But even so, if I shoot straight from here, it would turn pretty bad.

… It seems like Seiko was also my deed, so I should try to be prudent about grandly changing the topography.

If there's people in between the distance of the fortress, I would be killing them pointlessly as well.

If possible, I want to destroy only the target.

I look up.

It is still night.

While still cladded in my magic power body, I kick the ground.

After a leap of several meters, at the moment the momentum weakened, I used magic power to harden my footing and do another jump.

When the whole capital was in my field of vision from below, I increase the altitude even more.

“If it’s from around here… I think it will work” (Makoto)

I materialize magic power to serve as footing and stand in the sky.

Remembering last time, I look at the approximate direction of Stella Fortress.

But just by doing that, as expected, the darkness of the night still gets in the way.

Let’s try this.

I mark a place I can tell with the topography that it is there.

Concentrating at both ends, me and that place, I don’t spread my awareness to everything that’s around, but at the place that I am looking at. As if tying it to me.

This is a method I used in Japan when my target had quite a lot of distance.

With several trial and errors, my vision finds a giant fortress that is not lighted.

Must be that.

Well then, let’s do it.

I take another arrow from a space where nothing is supposed to be.

There’s no need to carry a quiver. That’s the good part of this method Tomoe thought of.

It is also good that the gist of this method is practically the same as opening a door to Asora.

It is not like I have a grudge towards the building, so the time I used before I drew my bow to the limit wasn't that long.

There's no need to wait for the arrow to turn red after all.

"With this, a business dealt with" (Makoto)

How far is the distance, frankly speaking, I don't know.

Several tens of kilometers, no, maybe even more?

But strangely, I didn't feel like I would miss at all.

The red light makes a trail, and that fired arrow hits the objective location. It created a beautiful pillar of light.

I patiently look at it and confirm the state when it is over.

If it is still safe, I would have to shoot another one after all.

… Looks like it will be okay.

The fortress and, of course, a portion of the terrain around it was dragged as well; the ground turned mortar shaped.

With this, the request of the Goddess has been finished.

I disperse the magic power serving as my footing.

As if being pulled from below, my free fall began.

I confirm the place where Shiki is and, creating several footholds, I alter my trajectory.

Safely dropping to the ground, or more like, I crashed onto it.

If I left my body in the center of the magic power body, there would have been no problems.

If I get dropped in the future, I will be totally fine.

Confirming the figure of Shiki that seemed as if he had trouble saying something in thought transmission, I could tell that he was fine.

He is fine but…

“Why… are you in that form?” (Makoto)

“I am truly sorry. I have exposed my appearance. Lancer was unexpectedly…” (Shiki)

Shiki lowers his head deeply.

Shiki’s form was not the Lich but the hyuman one.

“Seems like you are quite exhausted. Let’s return quick” (Makoto)

“Is it okay to leave the capital like this? The hero… it seemed like she was no stranger to you though” (Shiki)

While making a face that can’t hide his exhaustion, Shiki still asked me about my actions from here on.

I did say senpai after all.

Of course he would remember.

If Shiki and Tomoe looked at my memories, it wouldn’t be strange for them to know her as well though.

Now that I think about it, they didn’t show much interest in my classmates and friends.

“The people of Limia should be able to do something about the capital right? It seems like the King is also hurrying, so if we are going to involve ourselves, it is fine to do it later. If we do things without understanding the situation, I think like it would turn troublesome later after all. About the hero… well, she is indeed someone I know. I will talk about that when we return. Not only did she see me in that appearance, I also saw her in such an appearance as well. Honestly, I don’t know with what face I should be meeting her with” (Makoto)

I showed her a special effect hero cosplay and I saw her sexy cosplay. Just what kind of face should I make? Seriously, whenever I am involved with the Goddess, nothing good happens.

“Long time no see… would obviously be bad huh” (Shiki)

“… Impossible” (Makoto)

“But Hibiki didn’t seem like she was that embarrassed with her appearance though. When I was looking as well, she didn’t show any noteworthy reaction and was unreserved” (Shiki)

“Well, isn’t that because you are a skeleton?” (Makoto)

“She also saw me in this form though” (Shiki)

“Hm, did senpai have that kind of preference?” (Makoto)

I never heard of this.

… No no, don’t be troubled by this.

Even if she has that kind of preference, it is not like it is well-known.

In the first place, I have only seen senpai in regular clothes once, and it was by chance.

It is practically the same as not knowing her at all.

How stupid.

Let’s return quickly.

It is me, so at worst, I might even run into her if I stay long.

It seems like there’s no survivors around here, but even with that.

“Also, about the adventurer of Tsige. I was unable to save him” (Shiki)

“Can’t be helped. An adventurer is that kind of job after all. He himself chose to participate in the war and came all the way to

Limia. He must have been prepared" (Makoto)

"It would be good if that's the case" (Shiki)

"If senpai is fine, for the time being, there's no problem. Don't mind it much. Try sleeping for a bit" (Makoto)

"… Now that I think about it, there's no contact from Tomoe-dono and the others" (Shiki)

"They are probably already in Asora. In thought transmission, she told me, while giggling, to look forward to her report" (Makoto)

"As always, so much liberty, those two" (Shiki)

Shiki makes a distant look.

"At that side there was no Dragon Slayer and hero, so wasn't it easy? You shouldn't blame yourself too much, Shiki. You really did well after all" (Makoto)

It seems like he was slightly dispirited so I try cheering him.

"Waka-sama, looks like you easily handled Sofia. I don't see a single wound or dirt" (Shiki)

A heavy gaze. It seems Shiki faced quite the hard battle against Lancer.

But to encourage him by saying that wasn't the case, I think that it would make him even more despondent.

"Well, she was a handy opponent to test my power" (Makoto)

"… I have to become stronger" (Shiki)

"Yeah. If there's anything I can help with, I will also accompany you" (Makoto)

"Please! Oh, and by the way Waka-sama, I saved one of the companions of the hero party. They said they wanted to give their thanks but, what should I ask for?" (Shiki)

Ah, Shiki returned to the Rotsgard Shiki.

That he doesn't drag it forever is also a strong point of Shiki.

… It is a strong point he got by being thoroughly beat up by Tomoe and Mio though.

It is a splendid strong point, no doubt about it. Yeah.

I have to learn from him too.

"A reward. Isn't it fine to just ask them to leave it as if they didn't see your appearance?" (Makoto)

If he doesn't do that, at worst, Shiki won't be able to appear much in Academy Town or in places with many people. And I would face the full brunt of the business again.

It would turn into a situation several times more scary than this one.

I would sleep with a stomach pain.

I-If it's the cash register where I serve the customers with my japanese style 'a smile for zero yen' I feel like I might be able to manage somehow though.

"I already tried saying this, but who knows what will happen" (Shiki)

"I see. In that case, ah, if I remember correctly, in the hero party there's a Priestess-san from Lorel, right?" (Makoto)

I have thought of something good.

"Yeah, she said her name was Chiya. For a hyuman, she had quite the amount of magic power. In the future she will most likely become a prominent priestess" (Shiki)

"That's why, in this way…" (Makoto)

I tell Shiki what I thought.

“Understood. Then” (Shiki)

“Yeah. Let’s return to Asora” (Makoto)

I don’t think there is a banquet at this late night.

But it seems like their side had a big victory. In that case, it should be fine to do a banquet tomorrow.

While worrying about Shiki who has used his power too much and had his footing staggering slightly, we silently left the capital.

Chapter 164: Two Sleepy People

Im sleepy.

Looking at my face reflected in the mirror, I see my own half-open eyes with shadows under them.

Really sleepy.

Last night Actually, just a few hours ago I was in the imperial capital of Limia.

Its still dark, but the sun has been coming up late these days.

When we got back, it was already nearly morning.

「Everyone in Asora is strong, arent they... 」(Makoto)

As I wash my face, what Im thinking suddenly comes out of my mouth.

When Shiki and I returned to Asora, we were welcomed by the Orcs and Dwarves, as well as Tomoe and Mio who had come back before us.

The results of their battle were astounding.

Not only did they return before us, they suffered almost zero casualties.

I was told that there were zero fatalities and only two injuries.

The Kaleneon dominion is small, but a country nonetheless, and they had secured it.

I think Ive overestimated how much power is needed to possess

armies and countries in this world. This thought had occurred to me earlier in Limia as well.

I mean, look.

The Green Berets, the Spetsnaz, the Australian commandos, Cobra, the CIA, the KGB, MI6, the FBI...

Err, I think my list is slowly changing as I go.

Anyway.

When you see those really amazing-looking armed forces or special intelligence organizations on television or in movies, you get the feeling they have amazing military power, right?

Its a good thing that there werent any casualties, so lets just be happy that I was wrong in my expectations.

Even the injuries were mild, like a Lizards tail being stomped by a Highland Orc.

「I wonder if Shiki is alright.」(Makoto)

I received an explanation that I didn't really understand, saying that the enemys general was a strangely glossy, palm-sized dragon that Mio showed me.

Tomoe also mentioned that there were cliffs instead of national borders.

However.

An interruption prevented them from reporting any further.

As a report on what happened on our side, Shiki explained that we engaged Sofia and Lancer and finished them. He did this with a happy expression that didnt even try to conceal his sense of accomplishment.

Tomoe and Mios presence suddenly became restless, though their

expressions remained the same.

As Shiki was about to go into an explanation about our contact with the demons and details about the goddesss power, Tomoe put a hand on his shoulder and Mio seized his hand.

They both demanded a detailed explanation.

And then the two of them took him away for a discussion no, an evaluation meeting and I havent seen him since.

In the end, Ema had to take over. I was grateful for her summary of events, then I dismissed the rest of Asora.

So that everyone could rest, we decided to hold the victory celebration that Ema suggested the next day.

In other words, its tonight.

Right now Emas tired so she might still be sleeping, but someone has probably taken command and started making preparations for the party.

But I cant do that.

In fact, the battle we fought last night was an irregular one. Were supposed to be finishing off the mutants in Rotsgard today.

「Though I think its odd to call them mutants after fighting Io and Sofia. Im still sleepy～」(Makoto)

Even so, I have to go to the academy in the morning.

That means that I can sleep for only another one or two hours.

Rona said something that worried me too, and Im thinking that the demons might have had something to do with the mutants that gathered in the wealthy district.

It seemed like there might be demi-humans living in Rotsgard that are on the demons side.

Hyumans or demons.

Now that I think about it, I dont know which side demi-humans would choose.

Its actually strange to think that they would fight against the demons without any conditions.

Since, except for the few that are being treated well, demi-humans aren't seen as people by hyumans.

In that case, even if there was a merit system, there would be those that think that the demons are better, since they give them rights.

Not to mention that up until now, the demons only had cold, frozen lands. So there are probably demi-humans who had no choice but to approach hyumans so that they could live properly.

When I saw that army... This thought occurred to me on the other side, too, but I honestly think that the Demon Lord is an amazing person.

Knock knock.

Hmm?

「Yeah, come in.」(Makoto)

「Good morning, Boss.」

「Oh its you, Lime. Good morn」(Makoto)

「Sorry for bothering you so early in the morning. I was sent from the academy to come and get you immediately. You should go to the academy ahead of time.」(Lime)

「Is everyone there already?」(Makoto)

If I recall, Lime was supposed to regroup with Mondo and the dwarves at the academy.

But he came to wake me up.

「Yes. It seems the headmaster wishes to clean up already. Also... It is astounding that he is saying this so late, but it seems he wishes for us to pretend that we acted at his request.」(Lime)

Ahaha...

It *is* quite late to be saying that.

「And... The important lecturers wish for you to say that in this incident, your actions were performed under their orders, which they gave to protect the people.」(Lime)

Theyre all idiots.

In any case, listening to both of these requests is... impossible.

「Is that exactly what they said?」(Makoto)

「Yes.」(Lime)

As if Lime knows what I want to say, he nods.

「If I had to pick, Id say the headmasters one is better. Ill talk to Shiki and decide later. At any rate, Id like to spend my first day or two doing as I like before I have to go to the academy.」(Makoto)

「As you say. By the way, Boss.」(Lime)

「What?」(Makoto)

「There was a woman outside your room. Someone loitering around the shelter?」(Lime)

But there is no woman there now.

As he describes her features to me, I realize that hes talking about the ane-san* who has been coming to talk to me about things on her mind ever since I saved her at the brothel.

If I recall, her name is Ester-san.

「Ah, no, its a person I brought to the shelter. I guess shes the one Ive talked to the most among the hyumans here. I wonder what she

wants.」(Makoto)

「She disappeared after I gave her a single glance, so it must not have been anything important. I ended up imagining something indecent, thinking that she had surely spent the night here, hehe.」(Lime)

「... Spare me. Dont think that youre the norm, when youre so popular with the Gorgons.」(Makoto)

「... Too much of anything is a poison*. But I think you should learn to enjoy yourself more, Boss.」(Lime)

「Yeah, yeah. Well then, shall we go to the academy?」(Makoto)

「Is Shiki-san not coming?」(Lime)

「Ive been trying to reach him with thought transmission since a little earlier, but hes not replying. He seemed pretty tired, too, so I was thinking that you could come with me, Lime.」(Makoto)

「With pleasure. Also, please accept my belated congratulations on your safe return.」(Lime)

「... Tomoe. Shes done it again.」(Makoto)

I wondered why Lime already knew, but I realize that Tomoe has probably been going around explaining to everyone.

Or it might have been Mio.

How is it that Lime knows, even though he never shows his face here in Asora?

「The merchants guild, the Lizards from the arena and the Arke were worried. They thought that we might have failed over here.」(Lime)

「It wasnt really a success or a failure... Ah, tonights the celebration. You can drink as much as you want as well. Since I dont think therell be any left tomorrow.」(Makoto)

Now Ill go to the academy and take care of things there.

Maybe Ill go and make a complaint to Root while Im at it.

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To summarize.

The demon collaborators that Rona mentioned are nowhere to be seen.

But there are three mutants that are all bigger than Io.

With bodies over four meters tall, theyre rampaging and destroying a part of the city.

It seems that they have the ability to fuse.

Although, they arent like gachiin, theyre more like gucho... gucho.

And in the end, it was decided that the ones who have to deal with it arent the academys army, but the Kuzunoha company.

The academys army, who were easily cleaning up the remaining mutants, were completely defeated by these mutants that have become resistant to all attributes.

But the damage from no-attribute magic wouldnt be able to keep up with their regeneration, so it just became a wasted effort.

They've retreated, scattering like baby spiders, and now were left standing here.

Haah...

「Ah, you dont have to do anything, Shiki. You can just sleep.」(Makoto)

「I cannot allow that. For waka-sama to be working while I do nothing.」(Shiki)

「No, no, Im not going to do anything either. Lets leave it to the others, since its such a pain.」(Makoto)

Since Lime and Mondo are here, too.

Shiki somehow regrouped with our suppression force, but he looks even more exhausted than I am.

I have no doubt that he hasnt slept.

He might have been in a coma, though.

When I was told to secure the surroundings and left out of the main suppression force, I was actually happy inside.

「Well then, we will go.」(Mondo)

Lime and Mondo take a step forward.

「We wish for you to leave this one to us. Since we did come all this way with our weapons ready.」(Lime)

Even the Eldwa workers look ready to fight, holding an axe whose height far exceeds their own.

If you were to ask me to describe how big the axe is, its handle is so long that it appears as if the axe is walking on its own.

They cant walk around the city unless they hold the axe straight up.

But its not causing any problems in a situation like this, so I wont say anything.

「So Lime and Mondo take down two of them, and the Eldwas can take the other. Good luck!」(Makoto)

「Now then... Well kill it in one blow with our first attack. Lets go!」

There are three dwarves.

The one in the middle holds the axe on his shoulder as he points at the mutants right side, and they all charge in.

... Last nights discussion, they heard it too.

The tensions so high.

「Eh? Wheres Lime and Mondo?」(Makoto)

「Boss. The Tree Punishment will be fine, correct?」(Lime)

「Ah, I see. Youre right, shall we prepare a new symbol for the citys revival? Two trees lined up. It might be a nice addition to our new special products for Rotsgard.」(Makoto)

「Yes, sir.」(Lime)

「Mhmm, you can do what you want. Lime, the enemy is big, so you know what to do, right?」(Mondo)

「Of course. It wont even take three minutes. Are you ready, Mondo? Wait, youre already going in?!」(Lime)

「Dont be so slow, Lime! Theyre just slowpokes with large bodies, but somehow, facing such large opponents gets me quite excited!」(Mondo)

Lime and Mondo are lively, too.

Normally, I wouldnt think that its an opponent that Mondo could use Tree Punishment on by himself.

Its huge, and because the enemies are fused together, their combined resistance is unusually high.

But if Limes here.

Before long.

Its large body is wrapped in light.

Lime specializes in enhancing the power of others.

Though there are a lot of athletes who play sports doubles and are proficient at drawing out their teammates ability.

Lime uses that concept as his special ability.

To compare this ability to opposing mirrors* is an exaggeration, but he strengthens and amplifies power.

For example, if he teams up with Mondo.

To a certain extent, when Mondo is trying to defeat an enemy with one use of Tree Punishment, Lime allows it to work on some opponents that would normally resist it.

Known as the Aquarius combo, the two of them have good compatibility.

Its a clever ability thats useful in any situation.

Its a power that suits him, since hes such a helpful person.

While I was thinking about this, two large trees have already been added to the city.

Thats pretty amazing.

Theyre not just four meters tall.

Theyre definitely tall enough to become a landmark of academy city.

「Karatakewariiiiii!」

Oh.

And at the moment the Eldwas drop the axe no, the *huge* axe that has somehow grown even bigger on the other mutants head.

That mutant.

Splits cleanly in two.

The Karatakewari strikes the head perfectly.

Wait, that axe can grow even larger than its original size?

It seems like a weapon thats really limited in what enemies it can be used against.

I dont think it could be used in one-on-one fights.

During the long time the Eldwas spent living in seclusion, it seems they went and created a weapon I dont really understand.

But theres no regenerating from that.

As I look at the mutant that was split in half, I see its insides bubbling and swelling up.

Ah, they defeated it.

Huh?!

「Wait, it cant be...」(Makoto)

I had a bad feeling, and I was right.

It bursts open, and the contents fall like rain down towards the city...

「Good grief, now the city is going to be covered in a foul smell, isnt it. Never mind the center, but at least the parts of the city where its landing.」(Shiki)

Although Shiki is tired, hes created huge magic circles overhead, slightly above the height of the buildings.

Not just one, but several of them in three dimensions, and the sky is covered with them.

I guess they form a spherical shape.

「Amazing, what a sight.」(Makoto)

「Not at all, Im just using a weak power to burn up the raining matter; this technique was originally made to incinerate areas of land. I put up several of them and just altered how it looks.」(Shiki)

「Well, thanks to that, the city doesnt have to take a mutant

shower.」(Makoto)

「To swing that axe around without thinking. Those Eldwas must be punished later, as well.」(Shiki)

「As well?」(Makoto)

「...」(Shiki)

「As well, Shiki?」(Makoto)

「Waka-sama, please do not say it twice.」(Shiki)

Shiki is trembling delicately.

Lets not touch on that any deeper, then.

At any rate, were finished now.

Now once the academy finishes surveying the area and declares an end to the state of emergency, the city will be restored to normal and be calm again.

... I really dont get the sense that there was a battle here.

I stare at the huge trees, whose bright green leaves I can see swaying even from here.

I wonder whether those are evergreen trees.

Chapter 165: Tomoe, the Victory Celebration Party and Mio

The Dragon Knights are the core of the Lorel Unions military power.

As their name suggests, they are soldiers mounted on dragons. The difference in size between a dragon and a person is huge. As a result, the Dragon Knights are treated very differently from regular knights.

The ones who mainly do the fighting are the dragons themselves, so the abilities expected from these knights also differ from those expected of regular knights.

The ones who brought supplies to Rotsgard are units that soar through the sky on flying dragons, though there are apparently also units on the ground riding earth dragons.

They can travel on the ground and in the air but, perhaps because there arent many oceans, there arent any units using water dragons.

I heard that the flying dragon units have the advantage in the air for both attack and defense.

As long as the ace that is the Dragon Knights exists, Lorels defenses can be described as an iron wall.

I can definitely feel their confidence, as if it is overflowing from their bodies.

No, I should say was.

I can see the Dragon Knights sensing something unusual and looking worried for their dragons, while the dragons themselves are

standing at attention (though Im not sure I should call it that).

「Haah... I was looking forward to seeing how amazing these Dragon Knights are, but... Both the riders and the dragons are second-rate.」(Tomoe)

「I get that youre in a bad mood, but show some restraint!」(Makoto)

「Leaving Waka and Shiki aside, all I did was split the earth. Rather than sulk, why not simply accept the credit for it as Wakas own ability?」(Tomoe)

「... Youre being unreasonable.」(Makoto)

This person is the cause of that.

When we went back to the academy to deliver our report on the incident involving the mutants, Tomoe discussed something with the country leaders who were still in academy city.

I think that the various leaders were among them, like people from the temples and Sairitsu-san from Lorel, but Tomoe was exerting an extraordinarily unsettling presence.

As soon as we entered the academy, as if hed received some kind of message, Shiki said hed go to undo the students barrier and went in another direction. Now that I think about it, that might have been his sixth sense at work.

On the surface, it seemed that Shiki felt regret over the short sword being broken, but in reality, it could be assumed that the outburst of fake anger directed at Shiki was the cause.

While I was delivering my report to the headmaster, I also had to go through the futile mission of trying to calm Tomoe down.

While talking to Sairitsu-san, the topic of the Dragon Knights came up, so I half-forcefully dragged Tomoe out since she had shown some interest in them.

「But they are such opponents that even Mio could toy with

them... 」(Tomoe)

「 Didnt you announce that you were aiming to introduce the four seasons to Asora? 」(Makoto)

In reality, that needs a little more work, though.

「 This is just a vague feeling that I have, but it seems that the rewards are lacking. 」(Tomoe)

「 Why dont you drink a bunch tonight? And then well enjoy the four seasons. Were releasing the Japanese alcohol, too, right? Im looking forward to it! 」(Makoto)

Ive hardly drank before, so I barely know the taste of Japanese alcohol or whatever.

But as long as its alcohol that the people of Asora find delicious, I think itll be fine to say that its Japanese alcohol.

「 Now that you mention it, what should we do about the alcohols name? We should, of course, name it? 」(Tomoe)

「 Why dont you give it a name? Youre the one whos been the most serious about it. 」(Makoto)

「 No, I would definitely like to leave this to you, Waka. 」(Tomoe)

「 Well then, Ill think of a name by tonight. 」(Makoto)

Its a cheap price to pay to improve her mood even by a little.

「 I will be awaiting it in anticipation. Hmph, I do pity Shiki since he is always being treated poorly, so perhaps I will be satisfied with the fact that we have been able to obtain the four seasons. Having him so anxious to please me has probably gone too far. 」(Tomoe)

Tomoes expression held no trace of her bad mood as she spoke.

From my experience of having sisters, I know from this expression that her bad mood had not disappeared for good, but only temporarily suppressed.

... I guess putting it off till later is fine.

Ill just let time take care of it.

「Thatd be great. Anyway... Even though theres only about twenty of them, the dragons have quite a different presence to them, dont they? They brought quite a lot of supplies with them for everyone, and Im sure theyve made a good impression on the townspeople.」(Makoto)

Riding on dragons.

It seems Im not the only one who thinks thats cool.

Probably just because theyre rare to see, there are quite a lot of people watching the Dragon Knights from afar.

Theyre presumably people who are looking out for the safety of those nearby.

The citys reconstruction might begin as early as tomorrow, or maybe even today.

「My opinion on them will not change. A few of them are worth looking at, but most of them are nothing out of the ordinary.」(Tomoe)

「That might be the case by your standards.」(Makoto)

「Before you arrived, Waka, I was quite cautious about those men in regards to the future of the company. I would be far more useful than they, who are merely second-rates putting on an act!」(Tomoe)

What did they say with that dangerous atmosphere.

I dont think these guys would do anything bad, but Ill ask about it later.

「... Ah, I see. Well no, I have no intention of comparing you to those guys.」(Makoto)

「Hmm?」(Tomoe)

Did she really think I was comparing her to the dragons that the Dragon Knights are riding?

Isnt Tomoe a little emotionally unstable today?

...

Since were in this crowd, I doubt anyone is listening.

「Even if there were a hundred, or a thousand of them. Youre better to me, Tomoe. So dont sulk like that.」(Makoto)

I wouldnt normally say something like this, though.

「... Sometimes you are an incredible trickster, Waka.」(Tomoe)

「Thats not my intention. I know that youre always concerned about me, Tomoe. Im grateful for that.」(Makoto)

Expressing your gratitude so earnestly is a bit embarrassing, isnt it.

「R-Root also said this. This is what you call, "people mature in the blink of an eye!"」(Tomoe)

「Ill keep relying on you from now on. Though Im sure there will be more troublesome things to come.」(Makoto)

「I will be in your service.」

Root, huh.

Thats likely, too.

But I intend to pay off my relatively large debt.

Using that, I think I can probably get Root to approve the fact that Kaleneon didnt disappear.

When the other countries discover the existence of Kaleneon later, the Ansland sisters who are its representatives, Eva-san and Ruria, will probably start leading it.

For now, well be supporting them, but they wont last unless the hyumans and demi-humans cooperate.

Theyve even lost their faith in the goddess, so it will be the first country to be built from such a mess.

Im actually looking forward to how itll turn out.

Theyre dependent on us for now, but I dont intend for that to continue for long.

I dont intend for the Kuzunoha company to belong to any one country, either.

Ill think about that more later on.

For now, Im just glad that Tomoes mood has improved.

Next is Mio.

I guess Ill just talk to her at the party or something.

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「So with that. From tomorrow or the day after, the four seasons will begin in Asora. I think therell be some inconveniences with this as well, but lets all work together to deal with them.」(Makoto)

Its evening.

Im not used to this kind of thing, but I just gave an opening speech for the party.

Ive told everyone about the battles that took place last night - our involvement in the Rotsgards restoration and the revival of Kaleneon. After that, I just warned them about the possible effects of the four seasons beginning here.

All eyes are on me as I raise the cup in my right hand.

「Cheers!」(Makoto)

『CHEERS!』(Everyone)

With those words, the seal on the alcohol is quickly broken and everyone gathers towards the plates of food.

I sit down in my own seat, which is slightly elevated above everything else, and start eating.

The drink thats being poured is the Japanese alcohol made in Asora by Tomoe and the others.

Its taste and feel is similar to that of the Japanese alcohol in my distant memories.

I dont know much about Japanese alcohol so I wasnt much use in its reproduction, so from here on itll probably get milder or stronger depending on Asoras tastes.

I congratulate Tomoe on completing the alcohol, and join her in a toast as she enjoys herself.

My drink is poured into a large cup thats more like a tankard, and its somewhat different from how I expected it to be. I cant get away from the smile that is covering her entire face, so Im stuck drinking this.

Ill be honest.

Im not sure if I can drink it all.

This Japanese alcohol is actually pretty strong, too.

No, just for today, Ill somehow force myself to drink it all.

There are some tough guys already pouring themselves another.

But as for me

「This is a wonderful celebration, is it not, waka-sama?」

Before long.

Kakun-san, the winged peoples elder has come to my seat.

This is it.

Since an important person from an important group of people has come, not finishing my drink is not an option.

So I think Ill be able to finish this one tankard - no, Ill be forced too.

Its a weekday tomorrow and Im worried Ill have a hangover...

To think that Id be having an office workers problems in my teenage years.

「On this occasion, everyone worked considerably hard. So this is just my way of thanking you all.」(Makoto)

「Because we helped in Kaleneon, our efforts were also acknowledged. Thank you very much.」(Kakun)

「I have been making my judgments based on the battles I have been involved in, but I think I will start taking into account the results of practice battles with the other groups. I apologize for having such biased views up until now.」(Makoto)

「... Not at all, Waka-sama. Either way, we will have our abilities acknowledged, even in practice battles with you. Also, please speak at ease, as you do with Ema-dono.」(Kakun)

「To treat me with such respect, thank you. No, I will do my best. Today, we have the drink made by Tomoe and the food made by Mio, so please enjoy them as you like.」(Makoto)

「Yes, the Japanese alcohol is popular with everyone. Of course, including myself. Ah, if I continue being the only one talking to you, that would cause problems for the people behind me. As such, I will now excuse myself.」(Kakun)

「Eh, I think I can spare some time while Im in Asora so please feel free to come to me.」(Makoto)

The Highland Orcs, the four Arke, the Misty Lizards, the Gorgons.

The heads and leaders of these groups come one after another to have these flattery-laden conversations with me.

There was the battle last night, so I was quite agitated about the Orcs and Lizards.

Ive tried to fit them into the training schedule and thatll start tomorrow, so today Ill show some restraint and let them enjoy themselves.

The Japanese alcohol is quite popular.

But either alcohol percentage is too high or the taste is too strong for me; its not the kind of drink that I can just chug down.

However, there are definitely quite a few people that are drinking it as if its water.

Well, because of that, there are quite a few people who have already very drunk, having turned bright red.

Mios new menu has a lot of things that make good snacks to go with alcohol, so that might be another reason why the alcohol is being consumed at such a rate.

As for its popularity with the hyumans, I have only Limes judgment for reference, but At the very least, since its so popular with the demi-humans, I guess Ill give some thought about whether it can be turned into a product.

「Waka-sama, Waka-sama. Please try this next!」

Mio is bringing dishes of food out one after another.

Im thinking she should get someone to bring them out for her, but it seems that she wants to do it herself.

Shes bringing the food out on small dishes, so the quantity of each dish isnt much, but there is an amazing variety.

Its mostly focused on Japanese food with some Chinese food mixed in, but theres also some food from this world, too.

Its really diverse.

At this rate, she'll be able to produce French food, which I was never able to cook.

I have the feeling that some unknown, new cooking will be coming soon, too.

It seems shes in a good mood for some reason, so Im just glad that I dont have to go through all the trouble I did with Tomoe.

「Mio, dont just get food, eat some yourself. Here, sit down.」(Makoto)

「Ah, yes!」(Mio)

「Good work last night. You fought the enemy general in Kaleneon, didnt you, Mio? Im glad youre unharmed.」(Makoto)

That palm-sized dragon.

I havent heard the detailed story yet.

「Ive released him into the garden now, but that general was quite shrewd, and I admired him for that.」(Mio)

「So that was the general, after all What exactly was he?」(Makoto)

「His name was Reft, and it seemed he was a demon general or something. Following Tomoe-sans advice, I stopped him from eating anything and he became that size.」(Mio)

Demon general.

Demon general?!

「Youre telling me there was a demon general in Kaleneon?!」(Makoto)

He was allies with Io and Rona, right?

He must have been.

「I mentioned earlier that it was a coincidence. In the end, I was unable to mimic his clever reflection...」(Mio)

Mio looks a little disappointed.

No, thats not the important thing.

「W-why is that dragon behaving itself now?」(Makoto)

If it was originally a demon general, its probably not even really behaving itself right now.

But I saw it several times yesterday, and it seemed well-behaved.

「He lost his sanity partway through the battle, and began to just mumble to himself. After that, he began innocently chasing after a butterfly. He is quite adorable.」(Mio)

I see now.

I dont know what kind of person he was before, but it seems Mio toyed around with him and broke him.

Hes still alive, and hes apparently a demon general, so we should give him back when we meet the Demon Lord.

Yes.

「I-I see.」(Makoto)

「More importantly. Waka-sama, do you remember the promise from the other day?」(Mio)

「Promise?」(Makoto)

I try to think back.

Umm, its probably from her contest with Shiki.

「Ah, the one where I said Id listen to one request?」(Makoto)

「Yes! That one, exactly!」(Mio)

Mio quickly brings her face closer.

But right now, the other leaders are having conversations nearby.

「I remember it. Once the party becomes quieter, Ill listen to you, okay?」(Makoto)

「Yes! Then I will go to check if the food is being made well. I will be back soon, though.」(Mio)

「Okay, thanks.」(Makoto)

Now, I wonder what Mio will ask of me.

I said my words of gratitude to Tomoe, and of course Im also thankful to Mio.

If its something I can do, I want to do it for her.

「Eris, and even Akua. I wonder why theyre singing and dancing.」(Makoto)

For a moment, I thought I was hallucinating.

But I blink and the scene hasnt changed.

The pair of forest onis are doing a flash dance and singing enthusiastically.

When did you guys become artists.

Theyre actually pretty good.

I wonder if theyve practised it.

Mmm, its a good thing, I guess.

「They've gotten themselves into quite a state, haven't they? Those guys.」(Makoto)

「Waka-sama, it seems you have drunk quite an amount.」(Shiki)

「Shiki. Ive tried talking to those two subtly, so it might be alright for now.」(Makoto)

「That Thank you for that.」(Shiki)

How rude.

I havent drunk that much yet.

Its only my third cup.

「The first thing I did in the morning was help Ema and Mio-dono to get ready. So I had no hand in the preparation of the food today.」(Shiki)

「Yeah, that was a smart choice.」(Makoto)

「Mio-dono and I went around the port town looking for and discussing food ingredients, so I believe we should have new products for you to taste in the near future.」(Shiki)

「Im looking forward to it.」(Makoto)

Since there arent any seas in Asora, huh.

「If possible, I wished to speak to you regarding the lectures for the students later, but it seems that would be best saved for another day.」(Shiki)

「I dont really mind. For now, were still focused on the citys restoration so I dont think were in any hurry. More importantly. Shiki, you should drink some Japanese alcohol too, it starts to feel lighter after a while.」(Makoto)

「... I thought it was a considerably strong drink. I had some earlier, but I think it would be best enjoyed in small amounts from a small cup like Tomoe-dono is doing....」(Shiki)

「... Alright. Well then, for now, Ill give you this one and get myself a new one.」

I hand Shiki my tankard, which is about seventy percent full.

For some reason, Shiki has a defeated look on his face.

I quickly get a new tankard and raise a toast with him.

「Cheers!」

「... Itadakimasu.」

After that, the party is still going on.

The this party doesnt stop until the sun rises group are still there, while the Ill work hard tomorrow group have left a while ago.

Weve returned to the mansion.

I think I could work tomorrow even if I kept drinking until morning, but Shiki convinced me that itd be bad if the lecturer doesnt show his face tomorrow, so I called it a night early.

So in this room, theres Tomoe, Mio, Shiki and myself.

「I have to say, the Japanese alcohol was well-made. I will improve upon it even further, so please look forward to it, Waka.」(Tomoe)

「Yeah. Itll get colder from now, so something like hot sake would be good, too.」(Makoto)

「Hot sake! I see, I had forgotten about that.」

We discuss our thoughts on the Japanese alcohol - no, on the party itself.

Oh, yeah.

Seeing Mio grinning next to Shiki, who is wearing a complicated, troubled expression, I remember.

「Mio, the request that you had. Have you decided on it already?」

Thats right, I have to listen to her request.

Come at me with whatever request youve got.

「Y-yes. Ive decided!」(Mio)

「So, tell me. What do you want me to do?」(Makoto)

As I ask her, Im a little suspicious. For some reason, Mios previously-smiling face has changed to a stiff expression.

「Well then, I will tell you my request.」(Mio)

「Mhmm.」(Makoto)

「Please make me your a-attendant!」(Mio)

「Attendant?」[Hiragana] (Makoto)

Attendant? [Hiragana]

Attendant, huh. [Kanji]

So in other words, the oldest trick in the book.

「Yes! Tonight, with me...」(Mio)

「Hooh...」(Tomoe)

「As I thought...」(Shiki)

Maybe Tomoe and Shiki had already expected something like this; they say just a few words in reaction.

Hmm, well, this was outside of my expectations.

Something to do with cooking, or a trip.

I was expecting something like that.

「A-am I asking too much?」(Mio)

Im staring intently at Mio, and her upturned eyes are returning my gaze.

Shes kind of cute.

I see.

「Attendant, huh.」

I briefly say the word again.

Id like my first time to be with her, since I like her.

Or so I thought.

Disregarding the fact that shes of the opposite sex, I dont dislike Mio.

If I had to choose between like and dislike, I definitely like her.

But being inexperienced, Im not sure if I could lead her properly.

「Excuse me, Waka-sama?」(Mio)

「...」

「...」

Im being stared at by my three followers.

Theyre really getting me good here.

If she really desires me.

「...」(Mio)

For some reason, Mio is holding her breath.

I might be making you wait here, but Im not going to reject you, Mio.

Alright, Ive got it.

If its something I can give, I want to answer Mios request.

「Mmm, alri-」(Makoto)

「I made a mistake!」(Mio)

「Fueh?」(Makoto)

「I did not mean attendant~deshita wa.」(Mio)

「Eh?」(Makoto)

「Youre thinking of the wrong togi. I wanted you to teach me a method of washing rice to make it delicious.」(Mio)

「Eh, but just now, you said tonight -」(Makoto)

「Tomorrow! I wanted to taste it in tomorrows breakfast!」(Mio)

Mio?

What, but I thought she definitely said, Please make me your attendant...

What?

「Bufu!」[Snorting sound] (Tomoe)

「... Ku.」(Shiki)

Tomoe and Shiki burst into laughter, as if unable to restrain themselves.

Whats so funny?

Hmm, I didnt think I was that drunk, but did I do something strange?

「Tomoe-san, Shiki! Please be quiet for a moment!」(Mio)

「S-sorry. Bufu, ku, ahahaha!」(Tomoe)

「My apolo Ku, fufu...」(Shiki)

It looks like Tomoe and Shiki are really enjoying themselves.

If its a funny joke, I wish theyd let me in on it.

「Both of you, make sure you remember this Waka-sama, well,

could you please teach me?」(Mio)

「Ah, sure. But it seems Im a bit drunk today, so. Would tomorrow be okay?」(Makoto)

「... Yes. Of course.」(Mio)

「You might be better at it than me, but lets do it together.」(Makoto)

「Ah, Waka. In that case, I wonder if you could also teach me how to sharpen* my sword.」(Tomoe)

「To-Tomoe-san, you!」(Mio)

「How to sharpen a sword? No, didnt I teach you that a while ago? I dont know that much about it, though.」(Makoto)

Yeah, I definitely taught her that already.

But why is Mio being teased by Tomoe?

「Oh, is that so? I suppose I must have confused myself.」(Tomoe)

「Both of you, I told you Ill deal with you afterwards. Leave the room, now.」(Mio)

Mio is seething with anger.

Both of them? All Shiki did was laugh a little, though.

「Ah, since well be busy tomorrow. For today, its best if we just sleep now.」(Makoto)

「Ah, yes. Waka-sama, good night.」(Mio)

Mio smiles as she says good night to me.

No, not just to me, but to everyone

「We can go several days without sleep with no problem. So please, relax and rest. I will definitely come to wake you up tomorrow.」(Mio)

I wonder why.

I get the feeling that Im being ordered to sleep.

Well, its true that I have to go to the academy tomorrow.

I havent drunk that much, but its definitely a good idea for me to go to sleep.

But.

Theres something I want to say no matter what, isnt there?

I want to thank everyone.

Though I kind of just want to make one thing clear.

「Yeah, Ill do that. But you three, can I say something?」

As I say you three, Tomoe, Mio and Shiki stop moving.

I wonder if they can tell from my tone that Im not messing around now.

I do still have alcohol in me, but Im not saying this because I just thought of it, so its not a mistake to say it.

「You three have been fighting for me, working in Asora and watching the shop, so Im really thankful. If it was me alone, everything would be half-assed and nothing might have taken form.」(Makoto)

『…』

「Because I met Tomoe, I came to know about the world of Asora. We created a home for everyone. Because I met Mio, I remembered cooking and could get along well with the adventurers. Because Shiki was here, the company ran smoothly even when I acted like a spoiled child. Its really all because all three of you were there that I think I can keep being myself.」(Makoto)

『…』

If I was by myself, then definitely.

I would have gotten used to fighting and looked at the world with a skewed perspective.

I would have been living a no-good life in this other world.

「I want to give you something to thank you, though it might not be much of a reward. Ive only given you your first names, but I want to give you the same surname as me, Misumi. I hope youll accept it, if you dont mind.」(Makoto)

If I listen closely, I should be able to hear the noise of the party from here.

But a small amount of time passes where I cant hear a single sound.

「... With pleasure. I said this during the day, but Waka, you really are an incredible trickster sometimes.」(Tomoe)

「I feel like Ive been able to get closer to you, Waka-sama. I gratefully accept.」(Mio)

「From now on, I swear to do my utmost to meet all your expectations. There is nothing that would make me happier.」(Shiki)

Thats good.

In that case do I become Raidou Misumi?

Ill eventually meet Hibiki-senpai, the hero of the kingdom, in some form or another.

That might be a chance for me, too.

「Im glad you didnt refuse. Im going to go rest now, okay?」(Makoto)

Somehow, its become embarrassing to make eye contact with these three now.

As if running away, I turn my back on the room and leave.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

The outskirts of Asora.

Shiki is lying on the floor, out cold, and the whites of his eyes are visible.

As proof that a fierce battle has taken place here, there are numerous signs of destruction left across the field.

Tomoe and Mio are sitting on the remains of a huge tree that has been felled magnificently.

Shiki twitches occasionally at the side of the tree, and there is a blanket over him, but the two of them show no concern towards him at all.

「Say, Mio. Why did you make that poor excuse? In that state, I think Waka would have accepted you.」(Tomoe)

「Hmph Have you not had enough? What about you, making fun of me in such a horrible way?」(Mio)

「I am asking why you chose to throw away the opportunity of granting your hearts desire, to share a bed with Waka. He did consume a considerable amount of alcohol, but I think he was sufficiently conscious, no?」(Tomoe)

The two of them look in the same direction, towards the horizon and the night sky.

「...」(Mio)

「From my point of view, it seems Waka has grown considerably as a person in the past few days. The previous master might have simply offered to assist in the restoration of the imperial capital of Limia. At the very least, we did not end up having to attack Kaleneon by ourselves.」(Tomoe)

「... 」(Mio)

「He was even firm in his resolution when dealing with the dragon slayer. I do not think it would be bad for him to learn the warmth of a woman at this point. If that woman is to be you, I would ignore my usual course of action and encourage you. 」(Tomoe)

「... But duty and gratitude. Because he says such things, I just thought it would be wrong to join my body with Waka-samas. 」(Mio)

Mio opens her mouth, breaking her silence.

「Hooh? 」(Tomoe)

「I! Rather than because of my own feelings. I just realized that I wanted to join our bodies with him being the one to desire me. Things like well done or thank you. It occurred to me that those are the wrong reasons. 」(Mio)

From his true facial expression, she was able to understand how he felt.

Therefore, before this truth became affirmed, she discarded the opportunity of her own accord.

「You want Waka to tell you that he wants you. 」(Tomoe)

Tomoe simply nods as she speaks, not even looking at Mio.

A few moments later, Mio also nods.

「But you are aware that that would be difficult? Waka is beginning to think of us as his family. Rather than being lovers, you could take him as someone who feels close to you, but it would be a love that is quite different from passion. 」(Tomoe)

「I know that. 」(Mio)

「Is that fine for you? You are aware that your feelings might be unrequited? 」(Tomoe)

「Even so. Even so, I want to truly serve him, to be devoted to him. For now, I want to live with these feelings, this devotion.」(Mio)

「I see It is even more unlikely for Waka to desire my body than for him to desire yours, so I will at least encourage you. Though it may be meaningless.」(Tomoe)

「He has not said that there is another woman that he loves. There is no hurry. One day.」(Mio)

「... Human lives are short, after all. In another few years, it is possible that he will have one or two lovers that he will be married to for life, you know?」(Tomoe)

「If it is a woman that I deem worthy, then I can endure~desu wa. I absolutely cannot acknowledge a woman who is unable to cook. And I will have him embrace me just as much as her.」(Mio)

「Are you his mother-in-law? No, you are even worse. In that case, it will be a long time before we see Wakas child.」(Tomoe)

These two old, loyal followers spend the night talking to each other.

Chapter 166: It could be said that it was easier up until now

The mutants left large scars on the city of Rotsgard.

There were a lot of casualties, and the city was damaged considerably.

Of course, the citizens are unable to return to their normal lives and have to live in temporary housing while they work hard on repairing the city.

We made it appear as if the sisters Eva and Ruria had died in this incident and took them to Kaleneon.

People are still saying farewell to the dead over here as well, so I keep hearing about their reputation.

Theres not many people now, but surprisingly, it seems that theyre working hard every day without any complaints.

From our point of view, they were mutants (lol) but to the people of the city, they were an almost unprecedented event.

The demons conspiracy theory leaked somewhere, so the demons reputation had deteriorated considerably.

And so, a year passed.

Or at least, it would have been easy if things concluded like that, but Im not completely uninvolved with this city.

Im participating in the merchants guild meeting (though there are an amazingly small number of people now) and weve been making decisions such as opening temporary stores and declining people

wanting to become lecturers at the academy.

Day after day, Im doing work thats beyond my ability.

I dont have enough fingers to count the number of tasks I have to complete each day. Ive never worked so hard in my life.

「Is it really necessary to meet with the important people from other countries right now?」(Makoto)

I unconsciously let out a complaint.

This is needed, that is needed In every meeting each night, one after another, additional materials are requested (in other words, my workload increases).

In order to get the lectures at the academy started again as soon as possible so that academy city will appear as if its returned to normal, Ive been getting nothing but unreasonable requests. (Were still in the middle of restoring the city and theyre worried about the damn lectures; I wonder if theyre idiots.)

I have my hands full with this alone.

Despite that, for some reason, the prince of Limia, the leader of Lorel and the important people from the temple are taking turns calling on us for assistance.

I had to resist the urge to tell them to shut up multiple times.

Today, were fixing the main street.

Its been about a week since we started on that, and quite a number of places in the street are looking like theyre back to how they were before.

However, the prospects for our shop still arent looking good.

The temporary stores near the temporary housing facilities have become important so even if we hurried to restore our normal store, it would actually be inconvenient for the customers. So were putting that off until later.

「Sensei, how can you even call this a lecture?!」(Jin)

Jin is shouting.

「Sif and Yuno are working for the merchants guild in the warmth, this is discrimination!」(Amelia)

Amelia is shouting.

Indeed, todays wind is quite strong so it might be a bit cold.

「I dont think this is the work that were supposed to be doing...」(Izumo)

Izumo is complaining as well.

It seems that each and every one of the students attending my lecture is unhappy with its contents.

The people here are my students, minus Rembrandt-sans two daughters.

I wonder if those idiots have lost their minds. As soon as I returned to the academy I was told that theyve scheduled lectures to be resumed.

Of course, I told them that the lectures can wait until academy city has calmed down a bit, but they went and said that they want lectures to resume as soon as the academy is up and running.

My schedule for meeting people is packed and my business with the merchants is even busier, so its not the time for... No, a lot of areas in the city are still in ruins, and there are a lot of people who lost their loved ones.

People tend to forget the danger too quickly once its passed.

Therefore, under the pretense of solidifying the foundations, we decided to demolish the various partially-destroyed buildings and have some people work on engineering works all day.

Participation is mandatory.

Right after the academy is finished, Im finishing the negotiations to get the personnel we need to restore the rest of the city. Theres a considerable increase in the speed of the citys restoration if magic is used.

Therefore, the participation of the people who can use magic is quite important.

For some reason, Rembrandt-san heard about this beforehand and told us that he had assigned Sif and Yuno other work, so they managed to get out of it.

Well, it might be a good opportunity for those two to watch and learn from their fathers work up close, so I didnt force them to work.

「Its because you complain about this kind of stuff that you panic when facing mutants. Your weapons are crying, you guys.」(Makoto)

「... Raidou-sensei, now that Im talking to you directly, I was thinking.」(Jin)

「What is it, Jin.」(Makoto)

As if hes fallen for my words, Jin is talking back to me.

「Youre the same age as us after all, arent you? Actually, I get the feeling that youre younger than us.」(Jin)

「Are you saying that it's a waste for me to be talking?」(Makoto)

「You have more dignity in writing... Wait, thats not what I wanted to say. I was wondering whether the work would be finished sooner if Sensei were to participate. Since youre young and all.」(Jin)

「I could consider it as long as Im not being made to do something bothersome like being in charge of the site. Well, if you guys dont proceed according to the schedule, Ill probably end up having to make it a regular part of the lectures.」(Makoto)

「You mean to say we havent actually been assigned anything?!」(Amelia)

「The other guys are already getting lectures on practical skills at the academy, thats horrible!」(Izumo)

Amelia and Izumo interrupt the conversation between me and Jin.

Even though theyre girls around the same age as me, being looked down upon and glared at is enough to make me want to take a step back.

「... Theres no way thats true. If Im working behind you guys at the site, we all have a collective responsibility and well all receive the same penalty.」(Makoto)

『... P-penalty?』

「A practice battle with Youthrie-kun, no, Ill add Blue-Lizard-kun and Zwei-san to the group.」(Makoto)

『Impossible, impossible, impossible!』

All three of their reactions were in harmony.

Thats pretty amazing synchronization.

Incidentally, Youthrie-kun is the third Mist Lizard.

Fortunately, or rather, unfortunately for them, they didnt have any opportunities to participate in the recent fighting. Even so, they kept demanding for lectures without understanding the situation, so I set up a mock battle with him for them.

All of the students versus Youthrie-kun.

They will make a formation with the weapons Ive given them, while Youthrie-kun will just be wearing elbow-pads and shoulder-pads, light protective equipment that wont slow down his movements.

Yes.

Youthrie-kun is an unarmed fighter.

Apparently he was originally someone who found it easier to fight with his bare hands rather than use weapons, but hes a strange person who took a liking to some of the hand-to-hand fighting techniques in my memories and earnestly practised them.

He ditched the dagger that he had been using for the sake of having a weapon, and now hes the one and only grappler in Asora.

If you say that Blue-Lizard-kun has technique and Zwei-san has power.

Youthrie-kun has both technique and power.

In short, hes strong.

He could have held back against them, but I requested that he kept that to a minimum. For them, his strength must have seemed like that of an emissary from hell.

They were knocked down by Youthrie-kun like bowling pins in a strike.

Their weapons were completely destroyed, and they were treated to a full course of being punched, kicked, thrown around and arm-locked.

Seeing their fear, Im guessing it caused some trauma on them.

They got their weapons fixed nicely by the Eldwas and theyre back to normal, but even I was honestly surprised by Youthrie-kuns Wave Fist.

「So do it seriously. In any case, I think assisting in the citys restoration would only be a good thing, for both the academy and yourselves.」(Makoto)

「... There are plenty of people among the townsfolk who are just trying to leech off of us and make profits, though. Youre the one thats changed, Raidou-sensei.」

「Ill make myself clear. For me, returning the city to normal is more important than giving lectures. That being the case, Im going to stop giving lectures for a while, you know? Students would have to reapply. Is it alright if I close my lectures for now?」(Makoto)

「The way youre saying that. T-the rumor that you turned down becoming a full-time lecturer, was it actually true...?」

「Yeah, I turned it down. I dont intend to feed myself by being a lecturer forever.」(Makoto)

「Its a person that you cant apply common sense to! Well do it, well work hard! Please spare us from having to reapply. The acceptance rate will be crazy! We shouldnt have said anything...」

「You should have said that from the start. Even if you get kouhais, theyre going to overtake you guys in no time.」(Makoto)

For some reason.

After hearing my last words, these three have stopped complaining and are showing a lot more spirit to work.

In reality, I was joking about making them reapply, but I will have to accept new applications once everythings calmed down.

I have to continue with my lectures for these guys, too...

But if the uncomfortable feeling I had in Limia is correct, these guys might already be pretty strong right now.

I have to give a little thought about how hard I want to train them.

It wouldnt be funny if I created students that were stronger than the Knights Order.

I thought I was looking to raise elite students so I used the adventurers from Tsige as a baseline standard and evaluated the students on their individual specialized abilities. Looking back, that might have been a mistake.

Id thought that this would be a basic requirement, but I have to set the level of being able to survive trips into the wasteland as a goal, too.

Today, Shiki is portioning rations with Sairitsu-san from Lorel, and Mio is in Asora.

Tomoe is helping with the transportation of goods around the city, so... Haah. We wont be seeing each other until the evening.

I wish I could go back to the night of the party.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

The mornings work is finally finished.

The students and workers are on their lunch break, so theyre scattered around doing as they please.

As for me?

I have to go and meet some people for a little while.

Ive given orders for what needs to happen with the repair work, so itll be fine even if I dont come back for a few hours.

As long as nothing bad happens, anyway.

I have to meet the first person, so I head away from the main street and pass through the ruins of the Kuzunoha company, which is basically just rubble now.

「Ah, Im sorry about that, Raidou-sensei. Having you come all the way out here.」

「Please stop that. Youre older than I am, Ester-san, and I am not your teacher, so you can just call me Raidou.」(Makoto)

「It is rather troublesome that you do not feel guilty for mentioning my age, Sensei. But for me to refer to my savior without an honorific is quite impossible. The boss has not arrived yet; would

you mind waiting inside for a little while?」(Ester)

「Yes, I understand.」(Makoto)

「I have to say, you surprised me since you suddenly became able to talk. You do seem younger than when you were communicating in writing.」(Ester)

Ester-san is looking at me like its unusual for me to be talking normally.

I rescued her from a mutant at the brothel near here, but I never imagined Id be meeting with her boss. I did think that it would just be lip service, though.

Hes a person from the underworld, so its best if I keep a certain distance from him.

Jin said it as well, but I wonder if sounding younger when Im actually speaking is a compliment or a bad thing.

I just copied the spoken language, but apparently the impression people get is different.

「This is a major event, after all. There might be an opportunity to take here. It seems the damage is less severe here compared to other areas; when is business scheduled to be up and running again?」(Makoto)

Looking around, it seems that repairing the current buildings without having to demolish them first could work.

That being the case, once the road is fixed, wont these people be able to return to their normal lives sooner than expected?

「... Were in the sex industry, after all. There is no way that people and business will return without the city getting on its feet. We cannot welcome people just because the building and the girls are safe.」(Ester)

「Is there no demand from the people who have gathered here to restore the city?」(Makoto)

「Fufufu. Demand, you say? They have to worry about the eyes of the citys people. A brothel does not stand out as something that is necessary. It is a business that is influenced by its popularity and the peoples patronage, after all.」(Ester)

Is that how it is.

I suppose there are services that cant be offered just because there is a demand for it.

In that case, its no wonder shes exasperated after hearing my useless talk.

Shes looking at me in a gentle way. Or more like, I feel like Im being viewed as a child, so Ill leave it at that.

「...」(Makoto)

「Hmm, it seems that the boss has arrived. Well then, I will bring him here. In any case, I think he simply wants to thank you. He has a frightening appearance, but he has some compassion and kindness. And... No, Ill let you look forward to it.」(Ester)

Frightening appearance.

It already seems like the type of person Im not good at dealing with.

Oh yeah, thats right.

Compared to Ios face, no matter how frightening he looks, theres no way a hyumans appearance can be that scary.

I imagine the face of the powerful giant.

Ah, but.

If its a hyuman, I guess Zara-san would be a better comparison.

Thinking about the trauma I got from that person, I think this person should be alright.

「My apologies for making you wait. It seems Ester and the other

girls from the brothel are greatly indebted to you... Raidou?」

「... Representative Zara?」(Makoto)

The face that I was imagining has appeared in the doorway.

Eh?

The person himself?

「Ester, whats the meaning of this?」(Zara)

「Oh? Did you know each other already? Theres no meaning of this, he is the person who saved my life and his name is Raidou. He is a merchant running a small company.」(Ester)

「... You, you had me meet with Raidou knowing that hes a merchant?!」(Zara)

「Well, yes. He is still a novice, but he seems to hold a lot of promise. I thought Id let him meet with you, to return the favor he did for us.」(Ester)

「Thats not the problem here!」(Zara)

「Please calm down, Boss. I can assure you that he has no hidden intentions. Though it seems you not only know of him, but rather, you are acquainted... Have I done something unnecessary?」(Ester)

「Ah, no. I see, hes Raidou, the one who saved you.」(Zara)

Zara-san lets out a sigh.

To be honest, I want to let out a huge sigh as well.

I want to be spared from having to come here without mentally preparing myself first.

After a brief pause, Zara-san turns to face me and lowers his head.

「Raidou, thank you very much. Im very grateful.」(Zara)

「Wait, Representative. What I did is not such a big deal!」

(Makoto)

「No. You saved many of my employees. Showing this much gratitude is only normal.」(Zara)

Now its become awkward.

「Y-you were in ownership of these kinds of businesses too, Representative Zara? I am quite surprised.」(Makoto)

Desperately wanting to change the topic, I say the first thing that comes to mind.

「... Yes. Im in charge of these street-walkers and gambling. Ive crushed all of the others who were doing similar operations in other cities. I didnt plan for things to turn out this way, but I also have my own reasons for this.」(Zara)

The head of the merchants guild, and the head of the underworld as well.

It looks like I have my work cut out for me today.

I didnt plan for this to happen, so its amazing that Im doing this.

「Is that so? Well, I just happened to hear the screams of Ester-san and the others and came running to help. I do not have any intentions of making you feel indebted to me.」(Makoto)

I cant really word it right, but I want to get across that I didnt do it to receive their gratitude.

「... Fu, you havent changed. You still keep coming up with good answers. Even so, the Kuzunoha company has been spreading its name to the point of fiendishness. Its not like Im accepting Rembrandts words, but it does seem that youre going in a different direction from regular merchants.」(Zara)

For one moment Zara-san has a strict look on his face, but then he lets out an exasperated sigh and begins talking.

「The majority of your fellows who wanted to deceive you have

died. Limias second prince and the empress of Lorel have summoned you so that they can directly measure your usefulness. Dont get too thrilled with the people from the temple, either. Im not joking when I say that the one who has benefited the most from the mutant rebellion is you, Raidou.」(Zara)

「Ha, haah.」(Makoto)

Rather, the relations with those people are speeding things up unnecessarily.

Incidentally, the empress of Lorel is Sairitsu-san.

Id assumed that she was the wife of the emperor, but its actually an important title given to the person in charge of that countrys Priestesses.

Sairitsu-san said herself that her name isnt really well-known, but surely thats a joke; the name of anyone with a high position in one of the four great powers should be quite well-known.

... Not that I knew it.

「Even as a guild. There is a cost to having pushed them so hard for the transportation of goods. There arent even supposed to be that many medicine stores in the first place. More or less, the guys trying to resume their trading are starting up in different businesses.」(Zara)

「Eh, that wasnt my 」(Makoto)

「Idiot. Its not just for your sake. As long as you guys keep improving the quality and prices, there wont be a single store in the city that can compete with the Kuzunoha company when it comes to medicine. I was going to say this tonight. You should consider going in a direction to increase your sales, even if only a little at a time. Opening branch stores is fine as well.」(Zara)

「Branch stores...」(Makoto)

Its hard, because we wont have enough people.

「I have already mentioned this to Shiki... san, as well, but it would be helpful if you keep acting as a mediator with the academy to some extent. Right now, the reason the restoration of the city is progressing at a high pace is because we can use magic without holding back. We want to keep this up until its all back to normal.」(Zara)

Why does he add -san to Shikis name, but drop the honorific for me?

Could he be thinking that Im his guardian?!

... Its mostly true, so I cant deny it.

「For now, I intend to continue making requests to the academy. As well as the transportation of goods around the city through Tomoe.」(Makoto)

「The woman who tamed the dragons even better than the Dragon Knights, huh. To be honest, I have things to say about your inexperience and ability. But I can only take my hat off to the sheer number of unorthodox methods at your disposal. To think that youd be using a tiger cub from Lorel instead of a carriage.」(Zara)

「I thought that everyone in the Dragon Knights were strong.」(Makoto)

「... How so? I went to see them once, but theyre nothing more than decorations. Under that womans directions, they moved like a unit of flying dragons and they were barely fearsome at all.」(Zara)

「Ah, hahaha.」(Makoto)

「At this rate, even if only in appearance, Rotsgards cityscape will probably return to normal in about a month. As the head of a guild and as a manager of prostitutes. Ill say it once more. Thanks, Raidou.」(Zara)

Not only Zara-san, but Ester-san imitates him as they both lower their heads in a bow.

I cant really get used to this, being bowed to by a representative.

「I would also like to thank you. From now, if I show any flaws, please guide me, Representative Zara.」(Makoto)

「I will, whenever Rembrandt-san gets angry at you... Now that I think about it. As thanks for saving the prostitutes, when this roads shops reopen, Ill let you in for free. What do you say, Raidou?」(Zara)

... As he raises his face, its expression has completely changed.

Ah, hes got an unpleasant look on his face.

「What do I say? Im only half a man, and I do not partake in such activities.」

「One flaw I see in you is these ambiguous answers you give. Well, Ill interpret that in my own way. In that case, from now on, this brothel is free for the Kuzunoha company. Use it as you like. Ill give an order to use your stores for their daily necessities. Thats my way to show my thanks, and as my payment to keep your mouth shut about me being the manager here. Ill trust you with that. Well then, sorry for taking so much of your time. Both of us are busy people, but you have to put your best efforts into tonights meeting. Dont forget, Raidou.」(Zara)

After this one-sided monologue, Representative Zara turns around and leaves.

This means that he predicted that I wouldnt turn him down.

... No, I dont think any good would come of exposing him anyway, so I wont do it.

Even though he doesnt have an intimidating air, I somehow find that man somewhat hard to deal with.

Err, next is the prince of Limia.

Thats arranged to be in the conference room at the academy.

Chapter 167: Makoto, Overcome This

The prince of Limia, huh.

No, the princess?

If Im not mistaken, her name is Joshua-sama.

Honestly, Im surprised shes still in Rotsgard.

Thats exactly how I felt when she called for a meeting with me.

Her business is probably to do with her gender, but I know what I need to do first.

Apologize.

Thats all.

Theres no simpler solution.

And if it looks like the conversation will turn towards the country or the company, itll be fine if I just tell her that I cant reply quickly and we should discuss it another day.

Im still learning these convenient phrases that I can use in my work.

As I consider that, I knock on the door to the conference room.

「Come in.」

A quick reply.

It is indeed Joshua-samas voice.

Well, a person like the prince of a large country wouldnt do

something like use the another countrys facilities to set up a trap.

Maybe Im worrying too much.

「It has been a while, Joshua-sama. Im honored to have been called here today.」(Makoto)

Ill try conducting myself like Im a lower-class person.

Incidentally, the princes appearance is as it always has been until now; she is dressed in mens formal clothes.

Im not taken by surprise by her wearing a dress or anything like that.

「I heard that you are now able to speak; it seems that you have become completely fluent in conversation. I, too, am thankful that you accepted my request to meet, Raidou-dono.」(Joshua)

The prince is speaking in her usual polite tone.

Im a little of tired of having my speech mentioned every time I meet someone.

「So, what did you need of me?」(Makoto)

As according to my plan, Ill give her an apology and have her forgive me for my rudeness the other day.

I'm not entirely sure how to address royalty in a polite manner, so Ive accepted that Ill be impertinent many times today as I listen to what she has to say.

... Im also busy these days, so I kind of want to finish this quickly.

「... Well. Let us get straight to the issue at hand.」(Joshua)

「Please.」(Makoto)

「Firstly, the thing you found out about me the other day, that...」(Joshua)

Joshua looks like shes having a hard time saying it.

Shes talking about that, isnt she.

「The fact that youre a woman?」(Makoto)

「... Yes. Im sure you would know this by seeing my appearance, but this fact is known only to a few in Limia Kingdom. It has not been leaked at all to other countries, or at least, that should be the case.」(Joshua)

That should be the case, huh.

Regarding the demons and the empire, does she feel theres a possibility that it has been leaked?

Ah, I wonder if theres a chance that the room is bugged.

Seeing that Joshua-sama is talking about quite a serious matter here, its probably fine.

Were not discussing anything that would be bad for me, so theres no need for me to worry anyway.

「I see.」(Makoto)

「Of course, I understand that it was just an accident while you were trying to save me. However, regarding this subject... I would like to request that you do not mention this to anyone.」(Joshua)

Request.

Zara-san said it sarcastically, but considering our positions, this request is more like an order.

At the very least, it feels that way.

Well, this person might be from the kingdom of Limia, but she did seem to support the Kuzunoha company.

Even I know whether or not its wise to disclose the princes real gender.

「I understand.」(Makoto)

「... Huh?」(Joshua)

「Eh, err. I understand. I will not tell anyone.」(Makoto)

「Umm. But you know my secret.」(Joshua)

She looks like she wants to ask me if Im not going to make a demand in exchange.

Her expression has been slowly stiffening since we began our meeting, but now in a single instant, its relaxed completely.

「I will not tell anyone.」(Makoto)

Ill say it to her clearly.

More like, listen properly.

What else would I do when knowing the secret of a large countrys prince?

Threaten her, for example?

That would definitely be troublesome.

Have her be on good terms with me?

Even though our social position isnt equal and Im the only one who knows the others secret?

I cant picture her being my friend.

Also... Limia is the country where Hibiki-senpai lives.

I dont want to have a dispute with the prince of such a place.

「... Im sorry, but I cannot trust you.」(Joshua)

「Even if you say that 」(Makoto)

「Is there nothing that you wish for? If it is within my power, I will make an effort to grant it.」(Joshua)

Shes thinking that nothing is as costly as a free gift, huh.

「Currently, theres nothing in particular. Though I think it might be best for you to return to your country with haste and devote your power to its restoration.」(Makoto)

「... I am speechless. Indeed, that is one thing that I should do.」(Joshua)

In the first place, its odd that the prince is still in Rotsgard even though the king has already returned.

「Well then, please do so.」(Mokoto)

In fact, I can see her face occasionally looking like she wants to go back.

「At the same time, investigating you and negotiating with you are also things that I should be doing.」(Joshua)

Joshua-sama puts on a troubled smile.

Perhaps its because its to do with the first topic that we discussed in the meeting.

However, I dont have any intention of making a deal or submitting to any demands. Since Rotsgard is in this state and Asora is in commotion as well.

「I would be relieved if you would report that there are no problems at this moment in time. Im currently busy with the restoration of Rotsgard. You would know this if you did some investigating, but we dont have any thoughts to offer our cooperation to any single country in particular.」(Makoto)

「... It does seem that way. Other countries seem to be thinking of ways to bring you over to their side, although they are not showing any results.」(Joshua)

「Yes. And I would think that they should not expect any results from now on, either.」(Makoto)

Most likely, because we wont become attached to any particular country.

In fact, its unlikely that were going to be allied with only the hyumans.

... Though I cant say that.

「... When I tell you to report to me, exactly as you said, this is what happens. Hmm...」(Joshua)

「I have no intention of threatening you. Definitely not with me wanting something as the reason. I just made the suggestion because I thought that in your position, you should be returning to your country as soon as possible rather than concerning yourself with me, your highness.」(Makoto)

If Im the only concern, then she could probably just return.

「I see, then I shall accept your suggestion. It seems that I gave you a meaningless warning in our discussion.」(Joshua)

「Between the academy, the merchants guild, Falz-dono of the adventurers guild and the visitors from the temple, we dont have the time to pursue additional endeavours.」(Makoto)

「... I have some influence within the temple. It is not much, but I will tell them to restrain themselves.」(Joshua)

「That would be of great help.」(Makoto)

It really would be.

The fact that no actual work gets done just by talking causes a lot of stress for me.

「I am sorry for taking your time when you are so busy. I do not have any more... No, Raidou-dono. Could I ask you one more thing?」(Joshua)

「Please.」(Makoto)

「What do you think of me?」(Joshua)

Oi, isnt that quite an ambiguous question?

What I do I think of her?

About the fact that shes pretending to be a man?

Or is she asking about my impression of her as a woman?

The fact that shes stayed here to discuss these things with me instead of returning to her country?

Its hard to decide which of these possibilities I should answer.

「What do I think? I am not sure if this will be an answer to your question, but I think that you are having a hard time.」(Makoto)

「A hard time?」(Joshua)

「Yes. The fact that you are putting on that appearance, the fact that you are royalty, the fact that youre having to have these conversations with a strange youngster like myself. I feel that you are standing in a difficult position.」(Makoto)

「... Fufu, excuse me. Position, you say? It seems that you have quite a strange way of thinking.」(Joshua)

I wonder if I gave an unexpected answer.

Those are my honest feelings, though.

「Well then, I will excuse myself, your highness.」(Makoto)

Just in case, I address her as your highness so as not to continue treading on the fact that she is a woman.

I lower my head to Joshua-sama and bid her farewell.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

「Oh my, if it isnt Raidou-dono. It has been a while since weve met

like this, hasnt it?」

「... Falz-dono. I have been busy.」(Makoto)

I finished my discussion with Joshua-sama and met with several lecturers afterwards.

As I was walking through the corridors to leave the academy, I ran into Root.

As Root said, its rare to see him in the academy.

I havent seen him in a while, either.

... Now that I think about it, I let him borrow something, didnt I?

Though I intend to have him return it when the adventurers guild acknowledges the existence of Kaleneon.

「Can I have just a little of your time?」(Root)

「If it is only a little.」(Makoto)

「Thats good. Well then, over there is a steeple that nobody visits at this time of day, so lets head there.」(Root)

「Alright.」(Makoto)

Following Roots lead, I arrive at the empty steeple on the upper floors.

Wow.

Theres quite a good view.

I can get an uninterrupted view of the half-destroyed city from here.

「Im sorry about this incident. I didnt think that the adventurer Sofia would stand in your way there. Even though I could not anticipate the goddesss interference, I feel guilty towards you and the others, Makoto-kun.」(Root)

「You watched me through Sofias eyes and you feel guilty?」

(Makoto)

Its amazing that he can say that.

Part of the reason I followed him to this deserted place without thinking is because he feels indebted to me.

Another part of me is also thinking that if he treats this and that as separate matters, I could throw him out.

Virtues are important.

「Ahahaha... Actually, I made it so that I can use high-level adventurers as something of a safety net 」(Root)

「Its unusual that youre lying so obviously today, Root. The reason Sofia could do something like that is because she was a hyuman who had a close connection with dragons no, with you, isnt that right?」(Makoto)

I noticed it there, which is why I can notice it in his eyes now.

Its a weak lie considering its coming from Root.

「... Its unusual that youre so sharp today, Makoto-kun. You noticed Sofias secret?」(Root)

「I dont know exactly what it was. But I know it was related to you. I just thought it was impossible for a hyuman to mutate spontaneously and gain the power of a dragon.」(Makoto)

「I see.」(Root)

「And her obsession with you was no joke... Both of them. Thats why I said I just lent it to you. It seemed pretty rough on our Shiki, too.」(Makoto)

「He was a joke of a superior dragon, but its strange to think that he was defeated by a Lich, even one that has made a contract with you. I did teach Shiki-kun various things, but I didnt think that he would be able to destroy Lancer.」(Root)

Shiki himself mentioned that he barely made it through that.

For his sake, lets not tell Root that.

「Ill pass that on to Shiki.」(Makoto)

「Please do. In any case, Im grateful that you took care of both of them.」(Root)

Hey hey, are you planning to keep playing dumb after all that, Root?

「... Look here. Youre not finished, are you?」(Makoto)

「... Eh?」(Root)

「What Im saying is, I handed over management to you, but I only meant that I would lend it to you.」(Makoto)

「!」(Root)

「Tomorrow, no, maybe as early as tonight, right? Jeez, theres something wrong with you today, you know? Youve been having all your tricks seen through easily by someone like me.」(Makoto)

「Makoto...kun. You are...」(Root)

「Once were done cleaning up, Im going over there to ask for my reward for all of this. Get a hold of yourself, chief-dono of the adventurers guild.」(Makoto)

「...」(Root)

With no trace of his usual joking attitude, he simply returns my gaze.

How do I put this. Is this guy underestimating me that much?

Im extremely surprised.

Sofia, and I guess in this case, Lancer and the other superior dragons as well.

I entrusted all of their ends to Root.

That is what I let him borrow.

Tomoe was a little concerned, but I dont intend to ask for all the details.

After tomorrow, Ill just go to Root to have him take care of Kaleneon.

Im fine with that.

「People mature in the blink of an eye... That has really been the case for you, hasnt it...」(Root)

「Thanks for the compliment. Well then, Im going back to work. I need to show my face in the office as well; Ive got more work than I can handle right now.」(Makoto)

Leaving the astonished Root behind, I leave the steeple.

Chapter 168: Yata is that much

The same night that Raidou and Falz talked for the first time in a long time.

It is raining heavily.

Deep inside a forest that nobody would come to at night unless they had a specific objective.

There is a single silhouette, drawing breaths that are delicate, yet desperate.

In this forest where not even moonlight could reach, her faintly glowing body stands out in the darkness.

It is a female hyuman, basking in the rain as if washing herself with it.

It is Sofia Bulga*.

「Fuuh... fuuh...」(Sofia)

Sofia, who was defeated in the kingdom of Limia after taking an attack from the devil, Raidou.

She is lying in a nameless forest on the outskirts of Asuta, the royal capital.

She survived.

Raidou, that shitty brat...!(Sofia)

Her body stirs.

With frail movements that nobody would expect to see from her,

she presses her back against a nearby boulder that is taller than her own body.

She possesses nothing but her own naked body. Not even having any clothes to put on, her body is being struck by the rain.

「 Mitsurugi is definitely dead this time and they completely destroyed my weapon... At least they probably haven t noticed that I used Night s Cover as my trump card to escape death. What the hell is that monster...? 」 (Sofia)

Continuing to curse Raidou under her breath, she begins concentrating to restore her power as fast as possible.

She is definitely an experienced adventurer.

Because Root, the name of her final target was mentioned, she pressed a fight with Raidou that she should not have stepped into. However, it seems that she has regained her composure.

「 As annoying as it is, I have to find a way to fight Root while avoiding that. That is an opponent I can t face. For now... I guess hunting the Muteki* dragon in the wastelands is my first priority. 」 (Sofia)

「 How unfortunate. That will not happen. 」

「 !? 」 (Sofia)

There should be nobody here but Sofia, yet the indifferent voice of a man rings out.

Despite the fact that her body has not recovered yet, she forces it to move quickly, shielding herself by putting the boulder between her and the direction the voice is coming from.

In her hand is a sword made of light.

This was originally Mitsurugi s ability.

「 Hmm. Your movements are not bad. But compared to when you

were fighting Makoto-kun, they re like those of a tortoise. 」 (Mysterious voice)

「 Are you one of that guy s allies?! Where are you! 」 (Sofia)

Getting a rough idea of the situation, Sofia focuses her senses on the darkness of the forest.

Makoto, Raidou s real name.

There is no way Sofia could forget that name.

She also understands that someone else who knows that name is unlikely to be her ally.

She cannot take a prolonged fight, so she concentrates on forming a plan in her head to finish it quickly.

「 In the end, Lancer did not teach you the perception and senses of a dragon. That just shows that your relationship consisted of nothing more than using one another. 」 (Mysterious voice)

A young, silver-haired man appears from the darkness.

Wearing a cynical smile, he looks completely out of place in this forest.

「 Am I correct to assume you re an ally of that devil? 」 (Sofia)

Sofia questions the young man, keeping her body hidden in the shadow of the boulder.

「 Ally? I guess I could say that I m a dragon that would like to become one, but won t be accepted. 」 (Young man)

「 ... Dragon? 」 (Sofia)

「 I continued to watch after giving up on him, and because of that, I m also a fool who is now indebted to him. 」 (Young man)

「 Indebted... You, you can t be... 」 (Sofia)

「 Your intuition is even sharper than Makoto-kun, huh. I ll

introduce myself again. I m Root. I m the one you have been searching for, the Harmony Supreme Dragon. 」 (Root)

「 ! 」 (Sofia)

Sofia opens her eyes wide.

A completely unexpected encounter.

And under the worst circumstances.

「 What s wrong? I m sure you re not the kind of girl who would say that she can t come out because she s naked. I came out here like this because I wanted to have a final little chat, you know? 」 (Root)

Final.

From that word, Sofia knows what will happen afterwards.

She slowly comes out from the shadow of the boulder.

「 Root, you...?! You re the real one? 」 (Sofia)

「 You can think what you want. Do you want to be killed by the fake one, or do you want to be killed by the real one? I ll leave that for you to think about. 」(Root)

Immediately following Root s words -

Sofia instantly produces eight swords of red light, with the intent of melting the ground beneath his feet. But Root snaps his fingers, and all of these lights disperse.

「 Is that enough proof for you? 」 (Root)

「 ... 」 (Sofia)

Sofia s ears are filled with the sound of her grinding her teeth.

Because now she understands that this is the real one.

And after seeing him effortlessly nullify her perfectly timed surprise

attack, she realizes just how powerful her opponent is.

「 A piece of the ambition that I held in the past. It starts to breathe again, just as I remember. At first, well, it was fun to watch. 」 (Root)

「 ... 」 (Sofia)

「 My blood has become thick in the people it is mixed with, as if they were my own children. The two lives I created in a whimsical experiment. Both of whom are related to me. To think that both of them would meet in the same time period and join forces. 」 (Root)

「 You know the truth about me, don t you. 」 (Sofia)

「 Of course. I m also the head of the adventurers guild. I ve known since you were registered in the guild. When you found out about your blood s lineage, when you gained your ambition. When you became a woman, when you experienced heartbreak, I know everything. 」 (Root)

「 ... Including the fact that I have been looking for you. 」 (Sofia)

「 Of course, I knew. I had no intention of meeting you at all, though. You should be thankful to Makoto-kun for this. After all, thanks to him, you have accomplished your objective of meeting me. 」 (Root)

(Although, you can also say that thanks to him, everything else has gone horribly wrong.)

In his mind, Root silently adds these words to his statement.

「 You! You knew everything about my movements! You re saying that despite knowing all that, you did nothing about me, about Mitsurugi?! 」 (Sofia)

Sofia s voice is shaking in rage.

If he knew, there is no way he could have left them alone.

The reason for that being that Sofia and Lancer were aiming to take

Root s life.

That is why Sofia had thought that Root was unaware.

At the very least, the two of them had thought that Root was unaware of anything beyond the fact that they were making unusual movements.

「 I could see your objectives and I could see how it would end, that s why. I didn t think I needed to even face you. And I knew you two couldn t defeat the Sazanami* and the Muteki in the first place. 」 (Root)

「 Don t fuck with me! The Sazanami and the Muteki, I have enough power to defeat them both! 」 (Sofia)

「 Power, maybe. But if you can t even face them, then it makes no difference. You might have a one in ten thousand chance with the Sazanami, but the Muteki is in the furthest depths of the wastelands. And the Muteki is the kind of person who would find it too troublesome to fight properly. Ignoring the fact that you misunderstood the prerequisites, I knew that you couldn t even meet them, so what need did I have to interfere in your meaningless efforts? 」 (Root)

「 What, what misunderstanding...? 」 (Sofia)

「 About the idea that you could defeat me if you absorbed six superior dragons. It wouldn t be difficult to strip that power from you. I don t know what Lancer told you, but the power of absorption that you possess is only a fraction of mine. Even considering the fact that you ve deeply inherited my blood, there is no way that you can use the ability better than me. 」 (Root)

「 ... 」 (Sofia)

「 That s how it is. In the end, it was actually quite troublesome. I regretted leaving you alone. You can have a toast in the other world to celebrate the fact that you caused me just a small amount of regret. Ah, Lancer can t go there so you ll be having that toast alone, though. 」 (Root)

「 ... Leaving your blood in a world where people live on a whim... Creating dragons that didn t exist before and adding them to the superior dragons on a whim. All of this, you did all of this just on a whim?! Don t, don t fuck with me! 」 (Sofia)

Sofia once again creates a sword in her hand, covers it in red light and moves to cut him down.

Root is wearing only a simple shirt, but despite the rain, it is completely dry. The moment Sofia realizes this is when gold-colored magic power prevents her attack from reaching his body.

「 An imitation of Makoto-kun. Quite bothersome, isn t it. My limit is about ten minutes, huh. For him to be able to maintain it continuously, just how much magic power does he have? 」 (Root)

「 Ah... Aah... 」 (Sofia)

「 The absorption of all of the superior dragons, the thing that you were aiming for. That was once one of my foolish ambitions. Perhaps it s my fault for carelessly speaking of the past when Lancer was a child. 」 (Root)

Root speaks as he places his hands on his own knees.

「 ... 」 (Sofia)

Sofia is unable to speak.

「 The Tiamat project. 」 (Root)

「 ! 」 (Sofia)

Sofia was trembling ever so slightly.

Even so, it seems that Root sees it clearly.

「 ... Like I thought. Using my power, I will absorb all the superior dragons. I will understand the land, sky and seas better than the spirits themselves and divide the world in two with the goddess. That is the Tiamat project. You probably don t know this, but Tiamat is the name of the god of good harvest, who has the nature

of both a god and a dragon.」(Root)

「The god... of good harvest. There are gods other than the goddess?」(Sofia)

「Not in this world; not that I'd expect you to know.」(Root)

「This world? Then in a world separate from this one?」(Sofia)

Sofia is wearing an astonished expression.

It is as if she cannot completely comprehend Root s words.

「Though in the end, I stopped thinking that it would be disadvantageous to carry out this plan with the goddess who had already gained a considerable amount of faith from the humans when I met my husband. Who would have thought that this poor-quality product that I made while killing time by combining a half-dead dragon and a weapon filled with hatred would result in a powerful dragon joining forces with it and lead to me being able to dust off this old plan? It s a small world.」(Root)

Root continues to speak, not answering Sofia s question.

「Poor-quality...? Just how much do you think my life was fucked up because of this power that I never asked for?!」(Sofia)

「This is an old saying, but there is no good and evil when it comes to power. You became twisted and killed many people, demons and dragons only because you were weak, right? It s the same for Lancer. People, dragons and the strong will to remain in this world. Even if you could call him a miraculous creation and a superior dragon, he could have attained a great social position of power. But he wasn t satisfied with that. In any case, he was just a loser who couldn t control his greed and desire. That s why I lost interest in you.」(Root)

Like the conductor of an orchestra.

Root raises his right hand high into the air.

「I wasn t wrong. I wasn t wrong to hate you! Only you!」(Sofia)

As Sofia screams, she falls to her knees like a puppet whose strings have been cut.

In the instant Root bends his whole body forward towards her -

「 Ah? 」 (Sofia)

Sofia falls to her hands and knees. Red, blue, black and red-white spheres emerge from her body and gather in Root s outstretched right hand.

「 If your body loses the power of the dragon that you hold after you have already lost the divine protection of the goddess. You know whether or not you can stay alive, don t you? 」 (Root)

「 ... This... To meet such an end... 」 (Sofia)

With her eyes wide open, Sofia whispers as her head bows down to the earth.

「 It s quite a normal way of dying for an adventurer, isn t it? An unexpected, sudden death. 」 (Root)

「 I... will... 」 (Sofia)

A small golden sphere appears from Sofia s body, and she falls silent.

As he looks at the various spheres, Root lets out a sigh.

「 Superior dragons are reborn in an instant, aren t they? I can t bear to raise children, so I think I ll leave that to someone else entirely. Oh yes, I think I ll bother Makoto-kun with something, too. Since he s basically just staying at home. Anyway, I might need an excuse in order to have him watch the world for me. 」 (Root)

Root lowers his right hand.

The spheres of light have changed, becoming glowing eggs.

They are floating lightly in the air.

「 Lancer... Makoto-kun won t like it, so maybe I ll ask Aunt Sazanami. Since she s giving her blessings to hyumans and also probably won t ask to be reborn 」 (Root)

While deciding on how he will have the eggs taken care of, Root casually looks at Sofia s corpse, which is being beaten by the rain.

Tear-like traces run from her eyes onto the earth; perhaps she had let them out in her dying moments.

Or perhaps it was simply the raindrops that flowed down her face. It is already impossible to distinguish the two, and her expression gives no hints.

Such trivial things do not cross Root s mind.

「 Now everything is according to Makoto-kun s expectations, huh. As disadvantageous as it would be to keep her alive, Sofia is also quite pitiful... Hmm, if that s the case, at least. I could just say that she was finished by Makoto-kun, but I can predict what his next request will be, so maybe I ll return the favor. 」 (Root)

Root moves his left hand as he murmurs something.

Sofia s corpse floats into the air.

Root has thought of something. His expression is not that of an absolutely powerful person that he was wearing until now. With the complacent smile that he often shows Makoto, he vanishes from this place.

Along with Sofia s corpse.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

At the sound of a loud knock, my eyes open.

I m always very tired these days, so this is quite the rude awakening.

Still, it s not a bad tiredness.

Surprisingly, it might suit me to be working until it s dark and I have sweat on my brow.

The knocking continues.

「 I m awake, I m awake. What is it? Come in. 」 (Makoto)

It s so early in the morning.

I m in Asora.

The four seasons were introduced just the other day.

They were implemented in some odd circumstances, but the uproar from that accident is settling down.

To be more specific: Spring, winter, summer and autumn are rotating in the north, south, east and west with the city area that we re living in as the center.

Of course, there are also irregularities in the seasons everywhere, but we decided to just roughly classify them based on what we see.

That s why we re not being conspicuous by bringing people to academy city from here.

「 Waka, I m here to inform you of something. It s a very serious matter. 」 (Tomoe)

It s Tomoe.

No, Mio and Shiki are both with her.

Wait, what?!

The heads of each race have entered my room?!

I m glad.

I m so glad that I at least put my clothes on before inviting them in.

I don t have bed hair either; my appearance is at least somewhat proper.

「 I can tell that something s happened due to the fact that you re all gathered in my room, but what do you mean by serious matter ? 」 (Makoto)

A serious matter.

Considering that, everyone s expression is confused, or maybe I should say bewildered.

So it might be a serious matter that s not an immediate danger.

「 That s... It s an intruder... or should I call it a visitor? 」 (Tomoe)

Tomoe s words are blunt.

An intruder or a visitor, in other words, someone has come here?

To Asora?!

「Wait, does that mean that Asora s existence has been leaked to the hyumans?! Isn t that really bad?!」(Makoto)

「No, it is not a hyuman.」(Tomoe)

「You ve captured them for now, right? We have to ask how they got here, and what their objective is...」(Makoto)

「Waka, that is to say We have not captured them.」(Tomoe)

「... Eh?」(Makoto)

「In any case, it seems you are awake, so please speak to them directly.」(Tomoe)

「Directly?」(Makoto)

As I m about to wonder how -

[Yo! Misumi Makoto! Morning!]

「!」(Makoto)

A loud voice echoes in my head.

It s a voice I ve never heard before.

But considering his impolite way of speaking, it s a voice with a strange power that subconsciously makes me feel the need to speak politely.

I wonder if it s telepathic communication.

It s similar, yet I also get the feeling that it s somehow different.

Because I don t feel a connection to the other person.

I m unsure if I m supposed to just speak by thinking, but I try responding.

[Good morning. Nice to meet you? It is the first time we are speaking, correct?] (Makoto)

[Yeah! My aniki* turns out to have caused a lot of trouble for you, sorry about that. I happened to be nearby so I tried boldly coming here, but you were asleep. So I just waited.] (Mysterious voice)

Aniki?

Then that means he s someone s younger brother.

Regarding asking about his name.

If his older brother is someone I know, I d like to ask his full name.

[I apologize for being rude, but could I ask as to what your name is? If possible, your full name.] (Makoto)

[It s long, so sorry for abbreviating it. The name s Susanoo.] (Susanoo)

[Susanoo-san.] (Makoto)

[That s right.] (Susanoo)

Where does he abbreviate it, I wonder Susanoo?

His older brother is someone I know?

Susanoo

?!

Susanoo no Mikoto?!

No way!

[Y-y-y-you re the younger brother of Tsukuyomi-sama, Susanoo no Mikoto?!] (Makoto)

I m awake.

I m wide awake now!

It s a famous god, isn t it?!

Wait, it s a god of destruction, isn t it?!

The kind of big name that might cause a natural disaster if he s in a bad mood!

He s been waiting?

For ME to wake up?!

Oh, oooooh.

「Tomoe, why didn t you wake me up straight away?!」(Makoto)

「Well, I did think that it was an enormous presence, but I thought I should be suspicious since he was not giving his name...」(Tomoe)

Suspicious or not, it s a god who would be really bad to make angry!

H-he s probably not angry, right?

It s okay, right?

[My aniki made you a few requests, didn t he? For now, I m relieved that you seem alright. Well, we have come to this space that you re in. I hope it wouldn t be a problem for me to come closer?] (Susanoo)

[O-of course! Could it be that Tsukuyomi-sama is with you?!] (Makoto)

?

No, wait.

Tsukuyomi-sama is in a sleeping state, so there s no way they could be together.

But he definitely said「we」just now.

[Aniki is still under medical care on the other side. The goddess here has some pears. I was just on my way back from that. Don t worry, I m not going to tell that idiot about this place. In fact, I ll help you to keeping it hidden.] (Susanoo)

[I-I see. Well then, I will be waiting for you.] (Makoto)

He met the goddess.

That means that the visitor back at that time was him!

That goddess accepted a really amazing god as her guest, huh.

I can t blame her for being impatient.

[Sorry, but I need to ask someone to guide me. I came here riding something quite big, you see. I want to land in a wide, flat area.] (Susanoo)

[I-I understand. I will prepare someone right away. Where might you be, currently?] (Makoto)

[You ll see me right away if you look up at the sky. Well, I ll see you in a bit.] (Susanoo)

So the conversation ends.

I know my mind is blank right now.

But I can t just space out here.

I turn my head to the right and see my followers and everyone who is now conveniently gathered here.

「Mio. Quickly cook up all the ingredients you have. I think Japanese food is fine as long as you make everything that you think is tasty. You can round up everyone who s rotated onto cooking duty. Hurry!」(Makoto)

「Ah, y-yes!」(Mio)

「Ema, Shiki. Make preparations for a warm welcome. Once I ask them whether we ll be speaking inside or outside, I ll let you know, so start with gathering people and preparing the tools.」(Makoto)

「I understand!」(Ema)

「As you wish.」(Shiki)

「Tomoe, come out and greet them with me. For now, just come outside. He said that he wants to land in a wide area, so tell me where we can find a field where a large animal can land, as close to here as possible. Everyone else, divide yourselves into cooking or other things and follow Mio and Shiki s lead!」(Makoto)

「A field, yes, I understand. Well then, I shall accompany you.」(Tomoe)

I give orders as I walk down the corridor.

I don t know how I m supposed to welcome a god!

I don t know how, but...

I have to make all the preparations I can.

I step outside.

I m in a place I can look up at the sky, but which part of the sky am I supposed to look at?

As I think that, I see it immediately.

There is something flying in the sky, about the size of an aeroplane.

It s a bird.

A pitch-black bird.

「That s it, huh. Tomoe, is the place you thought of suitable?」(Makoto)

「... Yes. Still, that thing is considerably enormous. A bird that rivals a dragon; no, surpasses it - I have never heard of such a thing.」(Tomoe)

「Common sense doesn t apply to something that a god would ride. Anyway, mark the place where we want them to land so that they can see it from up there.」(Makoto)

「G-god?!」(Tomoe)

「Ah, well I ll tell you about it afterwards. For now, hurry. So that we don t show any discourtesy.」(Makoto)

「... That bird, it has three legs and its claws and beak are sharp. You are aware that it would be a problem if it goes wild?」(Tomoe)

「It s still probably safer than the one riding it Three legs?」(Makoto)

What?

For it to appear as large as a plane from here, it has to be pretty huge, right?

Indeed, looking closely, I can see that it has three legs.

A black, three-legged bird.

A raven.

Could it be Yata-garasu?

Ha Hahaha.

I m glad my eyes weren t crushed.

I remember hearing once that yata means large , but This is too huge, isn t it?

Passenger-plane-sized, huh?

Just what kind of torii would it perch on?

「Waka, it seems they have seen the marker. They are descending at quite a speed.」(Tomoe)

「Ah, I see. Tell everyone not to stare at it too much. Well then, Tomoe. Let s go.」(Makoto)

「... As you wish.」(Tomoe)

Susanoo.

To think that I would meet two of the three Shinto gods in one lifetime.

I don t know who he s brought with him, but he also said that he met with the goddess earlier.

I think that this encounter might be good for me.

Even so, I m nervous about meeting Susanoo-sama, who is known to be malevolent and is sometimes even called a god of destruction.

Chapter 169: Among a handful of great men, he is not included

The chaos in my head won t settle down.

To put it simply.

I m freaking scared.

Ravens are supposed to have sharp claws and beaks in the first place, but it s the size of a passenger plane and it suddenly... No wait, that s not it.

It s the three people (three gods?), our guests, that are stepping off it.

On the left, there is a slightly dark-skinned old man wearing a friendly, calm smile.

What s impressive is the pouch and mallet hanging from his waist.

In the middle is a young man wearing custom-made Yayoi-clothing.

A smile covers his whole face and he seems to be in a good mood; this person is probably Susanoo-sama.

The one on the right is a woman. That is to say, it s probably a goddess.

Like the old man on the left, I can t tell her name just by looking at her.

With the light shining on her from behind, her hair glows a light brown color. Gods probably don t dye their hair, so I guess this is

her natural hair color.

For some reason, she s wearing a suit.

She has bright, intelligent-looking eyes and when combined with her clothing, my first impression of her is that she is more like a businesswoman than a goddess.

「Nice to meet you. Susanoo-sama, and his honorable companions. I am Misumi Makoto.」(Makoto)

I was wondering if I should say If you would be so kind as to disembark ... But I thought I d sound too tedious, so I stopped.

I decided to speak more straightforwardly.

Incidentally, we have told them to wait until Tomoe gives the signal.

Tomoe wouldn t mess this up.

I know that much.

But they re gods from the world that I lived in and relatives of Tsukuyomi-sama. I thought that if they came to visit me, I should be the one to interact with them.

「Thanks for coming to greet us. Sorry to have the leader of this world go out of his way for us.」(Susanoo)

「Not at all! I am greatly indebted to Tsukuyomi-sama, so for you to apologize to me is...」(Makoto)

Really.

Tsukuyomi-sama has done nothing but help me.

These people might be aware of Tsukuyomi-sama s current situation.

Considering that, it s only normal for me to be doing this.

The only name I know is Susanoo-sama s, and this person has a

strong, wild image, so this must be him, right?

「Don t be so uptight. I don t think you ve done anything wrong, you know? And even if you have, we re not in any position to find you at fault for it. Mmm, oh, I know. You can probably tell from our earlier conversation, but I m Susanoo.」(Susanoo)

The person I assume is a goddess nudges him with her elbow, prompting Susanoo-sama to introduce himself.

「I am Daikokuten. You are familiar with the Treasure Ship, yes?」(Daikokuten)

The old man introduces himself as Daikokuten.

Ah, the pouch is a sack and the mallet is the thing you see him holding in his hand.

I see.

Hmm?

There was something about Daikokuten, what was it, I think I'm forgetting something else that's surprising about him...

It's no use, I can't remember.

He's a little darker than you see in the pictures and his earlobes are smaller than I thought, but he's got a calm air about him that's fitting for one of the Seven Gods of Fortune.

He is a kind-looking god. But I have a slightly uncomfortable feeling towards him, even though he is associated with Susanoo-sama.

「I'm Athena. In some places, I am called Pallas Athena. I am a goddess of Greece, a country far to the west of yours.」(Athena)

This onee-san introduces herself as Athena.

She's not violet.

That's a good thing.

Unlike Daikokuten-sama, she's completely different from how I imagined.

I mean, she's a businesswoman.

Wearing glasses would suit her.

I don't know why she's with Susanoo-sama.

For now I give a bow, then begin guiding them to my house so I can invite them inside.

Along the way, they seem interested in Asora and look like they're admiring it. Sometimes they ask various things in regards to it.

Tomoe and I both reply to their questions, but even if they ask about Asora's origins, we can't provide an answer.

We can only explain that it seems to have appeared when Tomoe and I made a dragon's contract.

「Please excuse us; your visit was very sudden so our hospitality is not quite ready. However, we are making haste to finish preparations.」(Makoto)

After all, it's impossible to put together a proper meal or banquet so quickly.

I can tell that when we arrive by seeing everyone moving around in a hurry.

For now I lead them to the biggest room, which is used for assemblies.

「I keep telling you, don't worry about it. You've created an interesting city, haven't you? It's really interesting.」(Susanoo)

「Indeed. And just the thought of preparing a banquet is enough to make us happy.」(Daikokuten)

「Really. And everyone is working hard. It makes me feel good to watch them.」(Athena)

「Thank you very much. And so, that is... Was there a particular matter you wanted to attend to today? If you wanted to do something, we will prepare it to the best of our abilities.」(Makoto)

At first their conversation seemed like they were just happening to stop by, but I don't think that's all.

「Hmm? The biggest reason is just that we came here was because I'm interested in the Misumi Makoto to whom my aniki made requests, you know?」(Susanoo)

「If you ask us if we had any other business here, well, there are a few small matters.」(Daikokuten)

「I just wanted to try coming here once. Now that I see it with my own eyes, Asora is truly interesting; a place of endless curiosity. Though I think we should keep it hidden from that person.」(Athena)

Things that gods consider "small matters" are serious affairs for people.

I know this from what happened when the goddess of this world slept once.

Though I have a feeling that it wasn't the main cause of events, but rather the final straw.

「It seems that we will still require more of your time to complete our preparations, so it would be helpful if I could inquire about these small matters you mentioned. Ah yes, we could offer a tour around Asora, if Athena-sama would care for it?」(Makoto)

「Me and old man Daikoku brought you a gift. Athena has a bit of a harsh lecture and a collar for that stupid girl.」(Susanoo)

「Susanoo-dono.」(Athena)

C-collar?

Immediately after hearing his frightening words, Athena-sama looks at Susanoo-sama with sharp eyes and speaks in a cold voice.

S-scary.

「Oh, ooh. I know. I won't say any more.」(Susanoo)

「Ufufufu. Ah, Makoto-dono. I would like to take you up on your offer of guiding me around Asora.」(Athena)

「Well then, I will have Tomoe guide you. Tomoe, would you please escort this lady around Asora? She's a real goddess, unlike that other one, so make sure you are polite.」(Makoto)

「I-I understand. Well then, Athena-sama, this way, if you will.」(Tomoe)

As I see Tomoe inviting Athena-sama along, I remember to warn her.

I have no choice.

Saying it out loud would be beyond rude, so I'll use thought transmission.

[Also, Tomoe. She's a jealous person in a way, so make sure you don't dare do anything even close to challenging her to a competition. You understand? You must absolutely not do that.] (Makoto)

[A-as you wish.] (Tomoe)

[She is a goddess of war as well, so start by taking her to the Mist Lizards.] (Makoto)

[Understood.] (Tomoe)

That should be fine.

Now then, with Susanoo-sama and Daikokuten-sama, I'll...

As Athena-sama and Tomoe walk out of the room, I turn my head back.

I see Susanoo-sama and Daikokuten-sama with smiles on their faces.

A god of destruction, a god of fortune and a goddess of war, huh.

It's a bit of a weird combination.

Especially Daikokuten-sama.

I mean, he's a god of fortune, right?

He's a multi-cultural god that appears in Buddhism, esoteric Buddhism and even the Shinto religion.

According to one theory, he's in the same category as Ookuninushi-sama, so I think he's probably an important god.

…

…

Mahā… kāla.

I-I-I-I remember now!

Daikokuten is Shiva!

He's a god of destruction!

A god who has countless legends written about him, a god who could literally blow away a whole country in one breath!

I've been looking mostly at Susanoo-sama; I slowly turn my face towards Daikokuten-sama.

He is smiling at me.

「Err, Daikokuten-sama. You are Shiva-sama, are you not?」(Makoto)

「Oh, I am called that too. Makoto-dono, you are Japanese, so I thought you would be more familiar with the name Daikokuten. You are quite knowledgeable, aren't you?」(Daikokuten)

「Thank you very much…」(Makoto)

My voice is hoarse at the end of my sentence.

I think most Japanese people wouldn't be able to name all of the Seven Gods of Fortune, but most people would have at least heard of Shiva, Daikokuten-sama.

I personally think Fukurokuju and Juroujin are the hardest to remember.

「Hey, Makoto. You say some clever things, don't you?」(Susanoo)

「Eh?」(Makoto)

「"She's a jealous person, so don't challenge her to a competition", huh? Gahahahahaha!」(Susanoo)

No way.

The thought transmission leaked?

!

Even to Athena-sama?!

「Miss Athena's lecturing is harsh, but she has no malice; I am sure she will forgive you.」(Daikokuten)

It was even heard by Daikokuten-sama.

I-I've gone and said something amazing.

「By the way. If I wanted to, it would be simple to see into a person's mind. In your case, you'd be fine against someone like Athena, but it would be impossible for you to keep your mind closed against someone like me, aniki or this old man.」

Eeeh?

「When someone catches my interest, I cannot help myself. "Telepathy" that uses magic, thought transmission, is it? Even without that, I can see everything. I am also concerned about Fukurokuju and Juroujin's thin shadows.」(Daikokuten)

Wow.

Gods are amazing.

They found Asora so easily, too.

The gods of the world I lived in, they're really amazing.

「It seems I have been rude about various things.」(Makoto)

「More importantly. Makoto, aren't you coming close to death these days?」(Susanoo)

「N-no?」(Makoto)

What's with this, all of a sudden.

「I see. Nothing like sudden headaches? Nosebleeds that won't stop?」(Susanoo)

「... I have those.」(Makoto)

It's from when I received power from that damn insect.

But coming close to death...

Just by thinking that, I guess it's transmitted to them.

「... I see, that's it. I was thinking of giving a power to you as well, but. I was wondering why you're carrying so much power that you're one step away from dying. Old man, can you tell?」(Susanoo)

...

I'm hearing some dangerous words.

Daikokuten-sama stares at me.

「That girl, just how much of a fool is she? We gave her five or six things to manage in this world, but perhaps we should take them all back and give them to our Brahma.」(Daikokuten)

Daikokuten-sama lets out a heavy sigh; I guess he's exasperated with just how foolish the goddess is.

That's good.

As far as gods go, she seems to be a failure.

「So? What's going on with Makoto?」(Susanoo)

「He's close to death. In fact, it is surprising that he is not already dead. The surface tension is such that he is just barely staying alive. She is even a goddess with the power of creation; what a fool. She just pushed the "Mastery of Words' Power" into an ordinary person.」(Daikokuten)

「Mastery of the Words' Power?」(Makoto)

Could he be talking about the power that lets me understand language?

"Mastery" sounds pretty cool, but...

Also, it seems I really am just an ordinary person.

No wait, if I'm an ordinary person on Daikokuten-sama's scale, I might actually be quite an amazing person.

「It is commonly known as one of the powers that grants understanding. It is a power that lets you communicate with anyone. It is a "rare" power that only a few great men hold.」(Daikokuten)

「I only asked the goddess to make me able to speak with hyumans, it is not an amazing ability like that –」(Makoto)

Ah.

Actually, the power I first got from the goddess let me communicate with everyone other than hyumans.

And then, I asked her to let me communicate with hyumans.

Which means that I can now communicate with everyone.

「I see. That girl is good at finding shortcuts. Indeed, if you remove the ability to communicate with even a single species from the “Mastery of Words’ Power”, it becomes a normal understanding ability. What an underhanded method.」(Daikokuten)

「So, what’s the deal. Is Makoto okay?」(Susanoo)

「It is best if you give up on giving him a power yourself. Makoto-dono is filled with the power of gods to his body’s limits. If I am correct, Makoto-dono, you have been increasing the capacity of your magic power?」(Daikokuten)

「Yes. I think so.」(Makoto)

「In that case, you should do that several times over. And then let us work to somehow contain this power within that soul of yours.」(Daikokuten)

「Th-thank you very much. However, it seems to have the effect of expanding Asora, so I have been refraining from doing so lately.」(Makoto)

「Susanoo, Athena and I will do work to make sure this world does not catch the eye of the goddess, so there is no need to worry about that. You can expand this world without having to worry about such things. If it becomes too much, we will make a return visit here.」(Daikokuten)

Isn’t it quite a problem if this world expands?

I actually didn’t even consider the possibility of this world being discovered by the goddess.

Though it would be reassuring to have them make sure she won’t be able to find it.

「That fool of a goddess. She’s making work for people who aren’t even here.」(Susanoo)

You’re absolutely right.

I’m in complete agreement your words, Susanoo-sama.

Chapter 170: Although the gods have come, happiness is still far away?

「Kuhahaha! I see now, so that s the fate of the demon-general-kun!」(Susanoo)

Susanoo-sama is laughing loudly at this sight.

For now it seems that he is pleased with the feast.

The dragon being held by Susanoo-sama by the scruff of its neck stares at him with wide open eyes, as if startled by his loud voice.

That s right, this is what s left of the demon general Reft-san.

With his mind regressing to that of an infant, he has become an incredibly cute baby dragon.

He s only cute in appearance though; he ll just be difficult to bring up when I talk to the Demon Lord.

Really, I wonder what I should do.

When I heard that he was the demon general I reflexively ordered Tomoe to return him immediately, but after thinking about it carefully, I realized that it would be quite inconvenient to return him in his current state.

Why was one of only four demon generals in a remote country like Kaleneon, anyway?

Was the timing of me steeling my resolve so poor?

Is that how it is?

「His power has been consumed splendidly and now he feels like some kind of pet, doesn t he?」(Susanoo)

「I am sure it is no laughing matter for Makoto-dono; you do know that you should not be laughing at this situation, don t you?」(Daikokuten)

Daikokuten-sama puts in a word for me.

He s nice, but he s kind of scary as well, isn t he?

Just earlier I asked him about the Yata-Garasu and he said something outrageous.

I heard that it s an incarnation of the sun and crushes the eyes of the unworthy who look upon it, so I asked him about it.

And then.

If you were made to hold the sun, it would be hot, no? I suppose it grasps and crushes* them unconsciously.

That s what I was told.

It s on a completely different scale.

What does he mean by grasps and crushes* .

I was probably making a confused face as Daikokuten-sama elaborated with an analogy.

It is like grasping and crushing a lit cigar, he said.

I grew increasingly uncertain of how I should respond to this.

Is that all it is?

「How are you intending to cut through?」(Athena)

Athena-sama asks with interest.

She struck me as a very serious goddess, but she looks to be the type who becomes lively with a bit of alcohol in her.

It seems that they have taken a liking to the Japanese alcohol.

Susanoo-sama praised it as well; it seems we managed to reproduce it quite successfully.

They acknowledged it as being delicious.

These three seem to love Japanese alcohol.

Tomoe seemed to be strangely happy about that.

「... I am thinking of recovering as much as possible, waiting for an opportunity and then letting loose on the demons' territory.」(Makoto)

「Such a patient plan! Oi, Athena! Since you don't have any present for Makoto, you should work here!」(Susanoo)

Susanoo-sama is making some kind of unreasonable request.

I'm not really expecting anything from Athena-sama, nor anything from Susanoo-sama or Daikokuten-sama, you know?

And they said they'd help me keep this place hidden from that bug goddess, which is more than enough.

Wait, did he say present?

I don't remember receiving anything from Susanoo-sama or Daikokuten-sama though?

They're not planning to leave me that Yata-Garasu, are they?

If they gave me something that huge, I'd be troubled.

「Me?」(Athena)

「Yeah! If you restore his body appropriately and, you know, erase about a month's worth of memories, there's no problem, right?」(Susanoo)

You make it sound so simple.

I was prepared for a drawn-out battle anyway, since Shiki won't be able to recover quickly.

Would it be possible for a god to heal him quickly?

「... Even though I've been drinking, that would be a simple matter. Mmm, if I were to give him a present, it might be best if I have him become completely obedient to me and grant him my divine protection.」(Athena)

It's possible...

「That sounds great, do it, just do it!」(Susanoo)

Don't fan the flames!

... I mean, please do not fan the flames.

Also, it's embarrassing to be called "Makoto-kun", so please just drop the honorific or something, Athena-sama.

「To us, this is a foreign land, you are aware? If we cause too much trouble here, we would not be so different from that girl.」(Daikokuten)

「... You're right.」(Athena)

「As Susanoo said, if you restore his body and erase his memories, there will be no problem. Some of the fear carved into his mind might still be left, but there is no need to be thorough enough to erase all of it. Susanoo, you are not even drunk, you should not be encouraging jou-chan*.」(Daikokuten)

「... Tch. It was going to turn out to be interesting, too.」(Susanoo)

「Err, Susanoo-sama. About this present, I don't really...」(Makoto)

「I see! You've been hoping for it, Makoto! Don't worry, we'll definitely surprise you!」(Susanoo)

Susanoo-sama isn't drunk, is he?!

Is he trying to make this kind of unfunny joke with that appearance?!

I definitely do not appreciate almost dying without even knowing by having a god's power put into my body, you know?!

However.

Neither Susanoo-sama or Daikokuten-sama have mentioned any details about the nature of this present.

Perhaps it was because the guests of honor, the gods, were slamming the drinks, but the night's feast went down quite well.

I was happy that they enjoyed the festivities and the food.

The most memorable moment of the night was Athena-sama's magic trick using the demon general Reft-kun.

"Be cured!" Athena-sama exclaimed in a high-spirited voice.

Reft-kun grew into a huge, majestic dragon, reminding me of the Naga from Hindu mythology.

That had quite the amazing impact.

The room burst into applause.

Would you call this a... magic trick?

Reft-kun's mind was still in its regressed state, so his antics were popular among the inebriated people.

Athena-sama was delighted.

Susanoo-sama tried to confront her.

Daikokuten-sama stopped him.

For some reason, a karaoke competition started.

Pies flew across the room.

... It was really amazing, wasn't it.

I didn't intend to drink much, but my head was spinning by the end of the night.

I ended up being shamefully escorted back to my room by the gods.

This unusual feast apparently continued on until morning, thanks to the volunteers who worked all night.

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I question myself.

I'm in a situation where my body has no strength whatsoever, and I question myself.

The earth is cool, huh. Wait, that's not it.

Is this all I can do?

Was this the right choice?

...

I suppose it's not even worth thinking about.

I'm lying on the ground like this.

I can't even move a finger.

This is how it is.

In that case, was it a mistake to take on the businesswoman-like Athena-sama as an opponent?

Should I have chosen Susanoo-sama or Daikokuten-sama instead?

That's not even funny.

I'm undoubtedly regretting that I could only do "this much".

I couldn't have chosen anyone but her.

The Yumi Azusa that the Eldwas made for me and the arrows that I haven't given a name are rolling around in front of my eyes.

They're not damaged.

As to be expected of top-level craftsmen; their work is on another level.

I'm pathetic, aren't I.

Just me.

I'm beaten and can't move.

「Makoto, get some training from Athena.」(Susanoo)

Susanoo-sama made this suggestion to me after breakfast; of course I answered, "please spare me."

The first reason for this is that my opponent would be a goddess, in other words, a female god.

"Well, would you prefer me or old man Daikoku? If we make any mistake in how much strength we use you'll be getting a hands-on course on how to be annihilated, though."

Since he said that with a serious look, I ended up facing Athena-sama.

And the results are as you can see here.

Tomoe, Mio and Shiki were watching right from the beginning and at some point Mio looked like she wanted to step in, but the other two stopped her.

Now that I think about it, this is the first time since coming to this world that I've been so exhausted that I can't move a single finger.

I chased this feeling and was even "desperate" for it, but I'd decided not to think about it.

I'm aware that I just didn't know what it would be like to be pushed

to my very limit, so this is a huge benefit to me.

My saving grace is that I narrowly managed to say “thank you very much” before I collapsed.

The goddess Athena, the deity of war, Athena.

Her power lives up to her name.

She’s terrifyingly powerful.

I doubt that’s her original form, and that’s probably not her proper equipment either. I doubt I even managed to get her to fight me seriously.

If she was fighting me seriously, she might have worn a himation? Like the statues of her do.

I couldn’t put up a fight at all against office-woman Athena-sama.

I was, in truth, careless because of her appearance. The fact that I had started to feel a baseless sense of superiority over the bug goddess is also true.

However, my carelessness over the fact that she was a “woman” vanished with her first attack.

The spear didn’t pierce through my body, but it broke through my magic power armor* and I had to twist my body awkwardly to avoid it.

Even though I had it fully formed with maximum density right from the start, since I was facing a goddess.

That was the beginning of the battle.

With her halberd in one hand, she summoned javelins one after another to continue the battle at mid to long-range.

My response was to freely use the magic I’ve learned in this world, as well as my bow and my magic power armor.

Towards the end of the battle, I became desperate for even the smallest amount of magic power and took off my clothes and rings in exchange for a power that relied on Surehit*.

Athena-sama probably didn't even need to go along with my plan, but she did.

And yet, the result for me is utter defeat.

Not a narrow defeat, but utter defeat.

After all, despite the fact that she was breathing heavily, Athena-sama quickly fixed her suit that had been ripped here and there and is now talking normally to Susanoo-sama and the others.

A big difference from me, who can't move.

Most of my attacks were deflected by her large, round shield.

That shield floated in the air, sometimes changing shape and multiplying.

I screamed countless times that it was ridiculous and unfair.

I've started to realize a little just how the enemies who face me feel.

Even so, I landed some good attacks, but she used her arms to block and brush them off. In short, they were ineffective.

「... Well, using up all your strength at the end was a failure but you did well overall, Makoto. Honestly, you held on far longer than I expected. Until some point partway through the match, I was thinking this whole thing might have been unnecessary for you.」 (Susanoo)

It's Susanoo-sama.

Moving just my eyes in the direction of his voice, I see that my three followers have all rushed over to me as well.

I'm glad the only ones watching were them and the other gods.

This is a little too pathetic to be showing to everyone in Asora.

Haha, at least that gives me some leeway.

「How surprising. To think that you were this tenacious. You have not fought many hard battles so far, so you were careless at the beginning. I was disappointed for a moment, thinking you should simply be cut down and finished there and then, but now I am relieved.」(Daikokuten)

Susanoo-sama and Daikokuten-sama are both demons, aren't they.

I feel a strictness from them that's comparable to my archery sensei.

「Indeed, but you fought bravely, Makoto-kun. Now then, let's fix you up.」(Athena)

Maybe I'm still drunk from last night, but Athena-sama who adds -kun to my name is the kindest of them all.

「No, Athena-sama. That is not necessary. I have not felt like this in a long time, so I would like to stay like this.」(Makoto)

When I was on Earth I constantly felt this after practice, this deep fatigue that leaves me unable to do anything.

It's a feeling that I haven't felt even once since coming here.

It's a feeling that was necessary for me in order to believe that I would be able to go further tomorrow than I did today.

So I would like to be immersed in this feeling a while longer.

「Makoto, this is a god. There were things you wouldn't have known without facing one in person, right?」(Susanoo)

「... Yes.」(Makoto)

「In the unlikely event you ever have to fight that goddess, this experience will be necessary for you.」(Susanoo)

「Yes.」(Makoto)

I can't ask what they had done to the bug.

However.

At the very least, they haven't exterminated her.

「As punishment, we've put several restrictions on her, including limiting the extent to which she can interfere with the world and suspending the growth of her control. Even those are simply measures we took when Aniki entered the first stage of recovery.」(Susanoo)

「So Tsukuyomi-sama might soon make a complete recovery? That is good to hear.」(Makoto)

If that would come true.

I'd like to meet him again in my lifetime.

「Thanks. Aniki would be happy too. Anyway, we set things up to monitor her to make sure she doesn't break those restrictions.」(Susanoo)

「If you want discipline, you put on a collar. Understandably, she wasn't too happy about it, so I decided on a choker instead. When I tried to put this spiked collar on her, I spoke to these two. I told them that men will always be lenient towards women.」(Athena)

Athena-sama, you're scaring me.

「We merely decided to leave behind that design in this case. Well, I understand what you are trying to say. You may have noticed this from the fact that we do not call that goddess by her name, but we are in a position where we must always give *that* a certain amount of consideration. If we ignore this fact, we will be no different from *that.*」(Daikokuten)

Like I thought, they are deliberately not saying her name.

I had kind of guessed that was the case, though.

In other words, that bug might be a goddess that I know.

I can think of a few candidates, but who is it?

「She still holds the power of a god. There is nothing you can do about that now, but there is the prior promise. If you were to become openly hostile towards hyumans, that goddess would take direct action against you, Makoto-dono.」(Daikokuten)

「... Yes.」(Makoto)

「If we'd arrived earlier, we could have taken care of things before that promise was made. But we won't let things end like that, either. We have to at least give Makoto some experience in fighting against gods. If I had to choose between you, who has received divine power from Aniki and that underhanded goddess, you're the cuter one.」(Susanoo)

「Thank you... very much.」(Makoto)

「Yeah. Remember, don't use up all of your strength. Your calm method of fighting in the middle of the match was good. Make sure you're always able to use that. Don't be afraid of increasing your magical power, draw your bow. If you do that, you'll be fine. And if the time ever comes, don't ever break the choker. It won't be damaged easily, but if that monitoring device is gone, that idiot might try to erase you by any means possible.」(Susanoo)

「Yes, that was not a fight you should feel ashamed of.」(Athena)

「Mmm.」(Daikokuten)

So my fighting was worthy of being praised by gods, huh.

Haha, I'm a little relieved.

I don't want a future where I can't raise a hand against that goddess.

Apparently I have the advantage in a battle as long as her choker doesn't come off.

That's information that I'm happy to know.

She probably can't take it off herself.

If she could, it would be meaningless as a monitoring tool.

But with this experience.

I think I can exhaust myself again.

I still have enough of an image left in my mind.

「Well then. We'll be heading back now. Get your followers to heal you up properly.」(Susanoo)

「Makoto-dono, you must draw your bow every day. Please hurry and discover the gift from Susanoo and myself.」(Daikokuten)

「It is unlikely that we will meet again in your lifetime. One day, when your life has come to an end, we will welcome you with open arms.」(Athena)

Well that was sudden.

Their arrival was also sudden, so I'm not too surprised.

「Well then. Please tell this to Tsukuyomi-sama. That I'm somehow staying alive thanks to the power that I received from him.」(Makoto)

「... Yeah, I'll definitely tell Aniki that. It was really fun. Oh yeah, Aneki* likes Yata-Garasu too, so I can't give it to you. She is a rare sun goddess and a very important deity, so it would be a pain to make her angry.」(Susanoo)

Aneki.

Ah, Amaterasu-sama.

She completely slipped my mind, but even if I remembered I don't know enough about her to make any assumptions about her anyway.

My fight with Athena-sama was reasonable, but maybe he's trying

to say that I fought really well.

Well, I mean.

She'd be happier if he brought Yata-Garasu-san back, so nothing more can be said.

「Waka!」

「Waka-sama!」

「Waka-sama!」

Waving their hands at me, the three gods disappear.

As soon as they're gone, my followers rush to my side, calling my name.

「Don't worry about treating me. Sorry for being selfish. Just let me lie here for today. Give the people in Rotsgard a good excuse.」(Makoto)

I try to resist my fatigue pulling me into a deep sleep.

The gods aren't here anymore, either.

Phew.

My consciousness is slipping away rapidly.

Everything about this is nostalgic.

Shit.

If I have to fight the goddess one day.

When that day comes, I will definitely rise up and bring her down.

I don't want it to be a close fight.

Just you... watch... I'll definitely... overwhelm you...

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「Well then. Athena-chan, where does it hurt～?」(Susanoo)

「That's sexual harassment, I'll tell Kushinada-sama.」(Athena)

「The first thing you do is threaten to tell my wife!」(Susanoo)

「Save the comedy for later. Well, Athena-jou-chan. You actually cannot feel the left arm that you used for defense, can you?」(Daikokuten)

「... I can't feel my right arm, either.」(Athena)

「Makoto-kun started pressuring you considerably at some point, didn't he? We couldn't stop grinning and wondered if you were going to summon your proper equipment, you know?」(Susanoo)

「... Would a human, no, a hyuman modified by that girl be capable of such things?」(Athena)

Athena folds her arm in an imposing stance.

Daikokuten taps his mallet lightly against her leg.

「Here.」(Daikokuten)

「Hyauh!」(Athena)

Athena collapses onto her back.

As to be expected of Shiva – no; as expected, Athena was faking her condition.

「Getting the idea from Makoto's magic power armor and using your own magic power to directly move your own body is quite a feat. You're controlling yourself like a marionette, aren't you?」(Daikokuten)

「You used that to take the flow of battle out of Makoto's control, huh? After that, he lost focus and made the bad move of using physically demanding attacks in rapid succession, effectively defeating himself. As expected of you, Athena, you're showing the wisdom of your many years!」(Susanoo)

「I'm still young! I don't want to have my age commented on by the likes of you two!」(Athena)

『Wahahaha!』

The gods are riding Yata-Garasu, on their way back to the world where Japan exists, where Makoto once lived.

Their topic of conversation is the battle between Makoto and Athena.

「Well, if he's that strong, that Makoto. I'm sure he'll have no problem if he fights the goddess.」(Susanoo)

「In all probability, he will have no problems. He is quite impressive.」(Daikokuten)

「Truthfully, I will admit in spite of my pride that I was overwhelmed. That boy already exceeds the human frame.」(Athena)

「Be that as it may, he is a hyuman. There are already two pure humans in that world. It was probably because it was helpful for shaping a future where the goddess has reached her limits, but the combination of humans and Makoto is extraordinary.」(Susanoo)

「It's like a hammer and chisel, isn't it. If the humans stimulate his potential even a little, Makoto will drive it in and open it. Disposing of the countless parallel worlds expanded by the two humans was truly troublesome. Makoto's acceleration of the process played no small part in it, either.」(Daikokuten)

「The cleanup after that disposal work. You told Makoto that you're giving him a gift but you're planning to have Makoto to do it, aren't you, old man? Payback for being made to do such troublesome work?」(Susanoo)

「Hohoho. It is good to be willing to go through hardships while you are young. Jou-chan told him that we would not meet again, but I wonder. I can see us meeting again.」(Daikokuten)

「... You want to bet on it?」(Susanoo)

「Of course. Jou-chan will not meet him, but I will. What about you, Susanoo?」(Daikokuten)

「I'll meet him, I guess. He's a walking box of surprises, I get the feeling he can make the impossible become possible.」(Susanoo)

「Wait, I haven't said a word about making a bet!」(Athena)

「Hey hey, does the great Athena-sama not have confidence in what she tells others? Saying such vague things, are you the same as that goddess?」(Susanoo)

「Ugu...」(Athena)

「Don't worry, it's not an important bet. It's just for fun, for fun! Don't worry about it!」(Susanoo)

Susanoo pats Athena on the back.

Athena is groaning with a look of disagreement on her face.

「I would like to ask two other things, would that be alright, jou-chan?」(Daikokuten)

「What is it?」(Athena)

「The first is about Makoto's power. What kind of changes have been caused inside Makoto by Tsukuyomi-dono's power?」(Daikokuten)

「That's...」(Athena)

「Don't hide it, alright? I'm well aware that you had an interest in it yourself and tried to get a feel of them from Makoto, you know? That's why I had you face him in the first place.」(Susanoo)

「... He is now very cunning, but you should have guessed that by now.」(Athena)

「As I thought, you're talking about that Asora place?」(Susanoo)

「Yes. The trigger was likely a contract with someone who can

manipulate space, but it seems he has used a large amount of divine power to expand that tiny space into a whole world. The part of that power that was supposed to grow his abilities has been used up for that. It could be said that in a way, he is connected to that world.」(Athena)

「So. You're saying that Aniki's power manifested only as that strange interfering ability? That was quite an incomplete ability. It was called Sakai or something, right? Only its subtlety resembles Aniki's style.」(Susanoo)

「No matter how long he's existed, I have never heard of the moon god's power contributing towards creation. This may be an example of new possibilities caused by interaction between people and gods.」(Daikokuten)

「I guess it was so Japan-like due to the effects of his homesickness. It would really have been a pain if the goddess found it, but...」(Susanoo)

Susanoo recalls his surprise at how much Makoto's world resembled Japan.

「That is likely a large influence. We made sure that girl can't interfere with it, so there should be nothing to worry about now.」(Athena)

Daikokuten gives a large nod.

Perhaps he is in agreement.

「Well then, the other thing. Surehit, was it troublesome after all?」(Daikokuten)

「... Yes. That was quite a nuisance. Especially because he immerses himself in the battle and forgets his emotions, fighting without any mercy. He fired at me relentlessly and by the time I couldn't hold my arms up anymore, it honestly felt like I was facing a machine. I'm trembling now just remembering it.」(Athena)

「Dear me. It is good that the ability that he is developing is his talent with a bow. That is best for Makoto. He is already putting

that Surehit to use not only with the bow, but also with his magic.」(Daikokuten)

Daikokuten suddenly narrows his eyes and looks at Susanoo.

His expression is reproachful.

「Hey hey, I just suggested a way to prepare Makoto so that if he were to ever fight a god, he could somehow manage, you know?」(Susanoo)

「... It is frustrating that we can do nothing but pray that this will be enough. I hope that the next thing we hear about that world is not a request for its destruction.」(Daikokuten)

「I feel the same.」(Susanoo)

「Me too. Worlds that were ruined by the involvement of gods are sad existences.」(Athena)

The three gods discussed Makoto.

The future in which he would be shouting at the gift that they left him is not so far off.

Her murmuring disappears into the wasteland, to be heard by no one.

Winter is coming.

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「I see, so Reft himself doesn't know the reason why he was there.」

「Yes. It seems he has lost a part of his memory. But at the very least, there are no signs that we can detect of the memories having been removed manually. According to the soldiers who escaped from Kaleneon, we can assume that those monsters advanced forwards.」

「Though it is difficult to imagine that there would be someone

who wants a place like that so badly that they would repel a demon general. No contact, no messenger sent back and their retreat formation was completely destroyed, huh...」

The demons' stronghold.

A city that is very different to towns that hyumans live in.

It is a city built around a castle.

Snow has already piled up deeply; it is a region that is constantly filled with complete silence.

The conversation between the king and his close aides continues in one of the castle's chambers.

「Rona, do you have some information?」(Demon Lord)

「My deepest apologies. I have attempted to investigate directly myself, but I have not found anything. We have not received any contact from the other party either.」(Rona)

「It does not seem to be a hyuman. This is quite headache-inducing. Continue investigating. But adapt your orders as you receive information on the extent of the damage; it is unacceptable to lose the lives of our soldiers for no reason.」(Demon Lord)

「As you wish.」(Rona)

「It is unlikely that the hyumans who have seen what is further north of Stella Fortress would be so quick to invade. Since there was great damage to the royal capital, after all. Io, Rona. You did well.」(Demon Lord)

「... No. We did not fulfil our mission. We do not deserve such words...」(Io)

「As he said. We were ordered to gather information, yet we have not been able to find out anything about what happened in Kaleneon. I feel that punishment for us would be appropriate.」(Rona)

The demon generals Io and Rona are wearing shame-filled expressions in response to the Demon Lord's kind words.

They might be a giant and a demon, but their faces are full of regret at not being able to carry out the orders from their king.

「Fu, do not worry about it, you two. I do not mind if you reflect on your actions, but do not prolong it and quickly renew yourselves to the task. Io, I will leave the Renhei* in the south to you. Rona, arrange a meeting with that Kuzunoha company.」(Demon Lord)

「Please leave it to me.」(Io)

「At once. Fortunately, it appears that Raidou is looking ahead and intends to meet with us as well.」(Rona)

「Raidou, huh. According to the reports about Rotsgard, he is undoubtedly an irregular person, but I am also looking forward to this.」(Demon Lord)

The Demon Lord laughs.

The relation between the two is that the Demon Lord has had one of his plans crushed by Raidou, but he shows no signs of being concerned about that.

At least, not on the surface.

There is also one more person here.

It is a person who reacts strongly to Raidou's name.

The Demon Lord, his trusted demon generals and one other person makes four people in this room.

She has been sitting without saying a word during the discussion, but now she responds.

「Your majesty, I wish to meet with Raidou, too.」(Sari)

「Sari. Is he someone you felt something about?」(Demon Lord)

「Yes. I am interested in that person. Rona showed me her report and I think they are a extremely unique company.」(Sari)

「Hmm, what did you think was unique about them?」(Demon Lord)

「The Kuzunoha company is too stable. Their scale is not insignificant, but they are showing no signs of impatience. Even though their existence hangs in the balance year after year. It is as if they pay for everything themselves, as if they are “self-sufficient”.」(Sari)

The girl called Sari is a demon whose youth is reflected by her appearance.

However her tone and eyes possess the composure of an adult, causing her to radiate an imbalanced aura.

「Self-sufficient? Those are not words you would normally apply to a company, Sari.」(Demon Lord)

「I think so too. Are they even a “company” in the first place? I feel some doubt regarding that question as well. That is why I want to see this Raidou person for myself.」(Sari)

「... I will allow it. If there are any others present, make sure to report back to me. Since you are my child, I am sure Raidou will not object to this.」(Demon Lord)

There are four candidates to succeed the Demon Lord.

They are all the Demon Lord’s “children”.

However, they do not all share his blood.

The way the demons choose their king is fundamentally different from the way hyumans do.

Exceptional children, not limited to the king’s bloodline, are chosen to receive the education necessary to become a king.

They undergo countless screenings to remove unsuitable candidates.

Today, there are only four of them left.

Sari is the youngest child among them.

She does lack management and diplomacy skills when compared to the other candidates, but she excels at handling information.

As a demon general, she would be on par with Rona.

After the meeting ended, Sari and Rona walked together.

「Sari-sama, it seems you are interested in the Kuzuhona company.」(Rona)

「Yes. I said it earlier, but I have some interest in the Raidou I read about in your reports. Otou-sama* seems to want to ascertain his role in this war, but my thoughts are a little different.」(Sari)

「You mean that he has nothing to do with the war?」(Rona)

「I want to determine whether Raidou will contribute to the future of the demons or not.」(Sari)

「Future, you say?」(Rona)

「Yes. No matter how the war ends, the future of the demons will continue.」(Sari)

「But Sari-sama, if we are defeated in this war, our future will also disappear.」(Rona)

「I don't believe so. No, thinking that way and wanting to win because of it is correct. Still, having a different way of looking at it is safer, is it not?」(Sari)

「... As a general of the army, I cannot agree, but I can understand that it is another way of thinking.」(Rona)

「That is fine. I'm sure you've already noticed, but I have no obsession for the Demon Lord's throne. Please be aware that I have such thoughts as well.」(Sari)

Despite the difference in their height, the conversation is not one between an adult and a child.

It is clear to anyone that Sari has received a unique education.

「I would never dare to presume you to be inferior to anyone, but why are you having such thoughts now?」(Rona)

「Because there is Roche-nii-sama for internal management; Shem-nii-sama for diplomacy and Lucia-nee-sama for military affairs. I believe it best for Roche-nii-sama to become the next Demon Lord and everyone to prosper under his rule. It's my role to act so that there will be no conflict, no matter who's chosen as the Demon Lord. As long as no major event occurs, anyway.」(Sari)

「...」(Rona)

「Do not make such a face, Rona. I find your words to be the most enjoyable to listen to. I'm looking forward to your lecture. Though I wouldn't mind a follow-up report on the Kuzunoha company, either.」(Sari)

The girl with mature thoughts unfitting of her young appearance continues walking, leaving Rona behind as she comes to a halt.

Rona watches Sari's confident stride for a while, before shaking her head as if clearing her thoughts.

The meeting between the Kuzunoha company and the demons draws near.

Makoto thinks that it is just a formality; however, this will not be the case.

He overcame the demon general Reft using some unforeseen god's power, but he is still unaware that this is merely an omen of what is to come.

Slowly, but surely.

The footsteps of the heroes and the demons approach the Kuzunoha company.

Chapter 171: If winter comes

「That s how it is... We re definitely advancing, but this is doing my head in.」

In a spot a few kilometers from Stella Fortress, there is a single tent.

There are several silhouettes standing around it.

The one speaking is a girl who is looking north with her arms folded.

After she speaks, she closes her eyes in thought. A moment later, she opens them again and unfolds her arms with a sigh.

「We re going back. We can t do anything about winter. At the very least, continuing to march north isn t an option.」(Girl)

「As we thought, there s nothing there ?」

「Yes, Wudi. That is likely the case. There will be obstacles if we head north, and we won t be able to rely on the towns and people. We would have to build camps as we proceed north. Dealing with demons is quite troublesome, isn t it?」(Girl)

The girl replying to the question from behind her is Otonashi Hibiki.

The hero of the kingdom of Limia.

Hibiki is surrounded by her party members as well as several knights.

They are the only ones on this deserted plain.

「Then, onee-chan...」

「So we ll end up following the orders that Larva-dono left us. I

thought this wouldn t happen until much later, but it looks like Chiya-chan will be returning home.」(Hibiki)

「I see... It s been a while since I ve been to Lorel. I wonder if everyone s doing well. Sairitsu probably hasn t changed at all.」(Chiya)

Hibiki turns to face a small girl.

She is Chiya, the priestess of Lorel who is traveling together with Hibiki.

She was making the same, complicated expression that Hibiki was, but it seems that this was just a pretense. At the mention of her Lauren, her hometown, a smile appears on her face.

「Well then, let s go back to the tent before it gets cold, Chiya-chan. We ll return to Asuta then prepare to go south this time.」(Hibiki)

While pushing her hands against Chiya s back, Hibiki returns to the tent.

Her tone is cheerful, but her expression is stiff and the smile on her lips is not present in her eyes.

(That day, after the royal capital was invaded. Neither Larva nor that white person were anywhere to be seen. Only a message was left behind. Take Chiya-chan home , huh. I don t know what the motives are behind this, but these are the words of that Larva, so there is merit to obeying them. We can also visit the academy city of Rotsgard on the way. The Kuzunoha company that is acknowledged by his Majesty and Joshua-sama is there as well. I wonder if Mio-san is there, too. And that Raidou person that I never got to meet. I have a feeling that Larva and that white person are connected to the Kuzunoha company, though it s just a gut feeling.)

Hibiki narrowly escaped death that day at the royal capital of Asuta.

She was saved by the Lich called Larva and the white person who was presumably his master.

Hibiki has confidence in her own power, but she can t forget those two utterly ridiculous people who easily surpassed her strength.

The difference in strength was similar to the Kuzunoha company that she saw in the distant city of Tsige.

(And I still have not heard the details regarding Ilum-kun s death; the truth surrounding that will also be in Rotsgard. Chiya-chan is still small so I was thinking about returning her to Lauren anyway. It s not a bad idea to do that during the winter. Okay, I ve decided. I ll make a request to his Majesty.)

She looks back once more at this wasteland, where not a single proper road is left.

「A scorched earth policy* that s on another level from just burning things to the ground. Even the seasons are against me; am I supposed to be Napoleon facing the Russian Winter? How vicious. This isn t the kind of plan that a hero should be using. If this was a game, the publishing company would be drowning in the critics comments... Seriously.」(Hibiki)

Credits

Author	—	Azumi Kei
Publication platfom	—	syosetu
Publisher	AlphaPolis	
Translator	—	Kraigskati lightnovelbastion
Editor	—	Izmi Haruha Tamamo

Isekai Arc 5

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